

WILHELM DILTHEY'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF MENTAL LIFE: THE UNITY OF
CONSCIOUSNESS

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Abstract

This study is an examination of Wilhelm Dilthey's conceptualization of mental life. An introduction recounting Dilthey's intellectual background is provided, including a detailed literature review of texts that elaborate his ideas. A description of Dilthey's analysis of the elemental constituents of consciousness is presented. Dilthey's assessment of self-consciousness is examined, and his psychological epistemology is explained. A discussion of Dilthey's analysis of logic and psychological processes is given. The study explicates Dilthey's position on the relation between aspects and dynamics within the psyche. A justification of Dilthey's distinction between mental and physical objects of psychological investigation is provided. Consciousness is shown to constitute a phenomenal unity. Examples of the relevance of Dilthey's ideas for contemporary psychological theory and practice are presented. Findings are recounted providing a detailed picture of main conclusions drawn from the study.

Keywords: Wilhelm Dilthey, consciousness, self-consciousness, conscious unity, experience, hermeneutics, phenomenology, descriptive psychology, explanatory science, history, clinical psychology

This Work is Dedicated to my Loving Father Salindra Kumar Majumdar and Sister, Susanne
Majumder-Lammers

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Dilthey's Background and Intellectual Orientation

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) was a nineteenth century German philosopher and psychologist. He was a proponent of a scientific system dedicated to the study of human mental, emotional, social, and historical life known as the *Geisteswissenschaften*, or the *Human Sciences*. Dilthey's approach to the human sciences primarily employs hermeneutic and phenomenological method in analyzing and describing subject matter. For Dilthey, psychology represented a potentially foundational discipline for the human sciences.

The following study is a detailed examination of Dilthey's conceptualization of the category *consciousness*, with emphasis on the principle of the overarching unity of it. The work describes and discusses a series of concepts regarding Dilthey's systematic thinking on this subject.

The study begins with an explication of Dilthey's most essential concepts on the form and contents of consciousness. It moves progressively towards an application of these to his psychological epistemology, and practical contexts in which many of his ideas are employed.

The central thesis to be proven in this study is expressed in the assertion that Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness demonstrates and maintains the principle of the *unity of consciousness*. It will be shown that Dilthey accomplishes this while describing expressed aspects of the psyche without theoretical contradiction. This will be accomplished while demonstrating the roles of the integrating concepts elaborated in that theoretical dialectic.

Dilthey's Background

Before directly engaging with the question of consciousness in Dilthey's writing, it is essential to review his personal and intellectual background. Dilthey's theoretical orientation is informed by a rich set of historical, scientific, and philosophical influences.

Wilhelm Dilthey was born on November 19, 1833 in the western Rhine region, German town of Biebrich. Dilthey's father was an Evangelical Protestant minister of the Reformed Evangelical Church, and Court preacher to the Duke of Nassau. "He was a liberal, protestant theologian strongly interested in history and politics; his son even found philosophical texts in his library" (Rickman, 1979, p. 24). His mother, the daughter of a conductor, had a strong interest in music, and imparted this appreciation to the young Dilthey.

His essays, first published in book form in 1932, under the title *Of German Poetry and Music* bear witness to his continuing interest in music, for they contain substantial discussions of Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. He had been enthusiastic about Beethoven since his youth when he wrote about his symphonies 'I feel as if only *there* is my soul in its homeland'. (Rickman, 1979, p. 24)

As a teenager Dilthey attended *Gymnasium* (High School) in a town named Wiesbaden. Thereafter he began studies in theology at the University of Heidelberg in 1852. Approximately a year later Dilthey moved to Berlin where he continued to study theology, according to his parent's wishes. His interests began to broaden in Berlin however, towards history and philosophy in particular. Rickman (1979) tells us that:

Even then he showed an incredible capacity for work and mentions working for twelve to fourteen hours a day. He studied Greek, Hebrew and English and together with groups of friends, read Shakespeare, Plato, Aristotle and St. Augustine, to name but a few. (pp. 24-25)

Because Dilthey held such a broad base of scholarly interests, and because he wanted to understand what he studied well, it took exceptionally long for him to complete his studies. He was financed in part by his parents, and also tried teaching for a period, but disliked it.

Dilthey showed interest in journalism as a student which remained with him into his career as an established academic. Dilthey “considered his journalistic work to be a natural consequence of his practical view of philosophy” (de Mul, 2005, p. 16). Dilthey possessed eminent intellectual scope and therefore practical capacity for the breadth of his work in journalism. de Mul (2005) reinforces this idea when he states:

Over the years his published works included articles on the logical, epistemological, ontological, anthropological, logical, ethical, and aesthetic themes in the work of philosophers such as Spinoza, Leibniz, Rousseau, Wolff, Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher, Schelling, Schopenhauer, Trendelenburg, Comte, Mill, and Nietzsche; on the literary work of Euripides, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Molière, Goethe, Lessing, Schiller, Grimm, Novalis, Hölderlin, Heine, and Byron, on the music of Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, and Wagner; on the theory of literature and music; on developments in painting and architecture; on the economic, sociological, and political theories of Comte, Spencer, and Marx; on pedagogical questions; on the work of such historians as Taine, Ranke, Droysen, Burckhardt, and Buckle; on the physiology and psychology of Müller, Fechner, and Wundt; on the biological theories of Darwin and Lamarck; and on the scientific work of Van Bär, Förster, and Helmholtz. (p. 16)

Dilthey’s diverse topical work as a journalist is a testament to his extensive range of interests and competencies.

Importantly, it was during his years as a student that Dilthey developed an avid interest in the work of the German philosopher Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834). An essay he wrote as a student on Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics proved highly influential, as “his work on the essay led him to form his basic ideas” (Rickman, 1979, p. 26).

Dilthey's interest in Schleiermacher originated at Heidelberg University. "One of his professors was the philosopher Kuno Fischer... under his guidance Dilthey studied the philosophical systems of Hegel and Schleiermacher (15: xxxv)" (de Mul, 2005, pp. 14-15). Dilthey's fascination with Schleiermacher's philosophy and theology was to follow him to Berlin, where he moved three semesters after having begun at Heidelberg. De Mul (2005) recounts that:

There he came under the influence of Schleiermacher's student Friedrich von Trendelenburg. Von Trendelenburg adhered to an organic worldview, inspired by Aristotle, on the basis of which he had moved sharply away from both the subjectivism of Kant and the speculative idealism of Hegel. (p. 15)

Additionally, Dilthey "attended lectures given by various students of Schleiermacher's, not only those given by Trendelenburg... but also by Nitzsch, Twisten, and Neidner" (de Mul, 2005, p. 17). Dilthey wrote his Doctoral dissertation on Schleiermacher's ethics for which he was awarded his Doctorate and shortly thereafter habilitated.

Dilthey's period of development as a student was crucial for what was to follow in his life and body of academic work. De Mul (2005) found that:

Dilthey studied the practice of historical research under the historians Ritter and Mommsen and also took part in the famous study groups of Ranke himself. In this period he became convinced that systematic philosophy and historical issues could not be isolated from each other, a conviction that remained with him for the rest of his life. (p. 15)

It is important for this study that Dilthey's early experiences as a student at Heidelberg and Berlin figured significantly in his developing an interest in Schleiermacher's philosophy and theology, as well as historical hermeneutics.

After a rather brief start to his working academic career at the university teaching at Berlin, Dilthey was offered the chair in Philosophy at the University of Basel, Switzerland. He accepted, and there he enjoyed financial independence and an intellectually robust, collegial atmosphere. William James (1842-1910), the American philosopher and psychologist visited Basel in 1867, and in a letter to his sister, describes the scene at a dinner party with Dilthey, which gives us unique insight into the man's character:

A soft, fat man with black hair (somewhat like the Renan of the photographs) of uncertain age between twenty-five and forty, with very small green eyes [Dilthey was then thirty-four and his eyes were, in fact, blue] he wore the obligatory frock coat with *an exceedingly grimy shirt and collar and rusty old rag of a cravat*. The professor overflowed with information about everything knowable and unknowable. *He is the first man I have ever met of a class of men to whom learning has become as natural as breathing*. He talked and laughed incessantly at the table and gave Mrs. Grimm the whole history of Buddhism, and I don't know what other bits of the history of religion. After dinner, Grimm and the professor got involved in a heated controversy about the primitive form of natural religion. I noticed that the professor's answers became somewhat tired and then his massive head suddenly fell forward. Grimm called out that he'd better have a proper sleep in his chair. He eagerly consented. Grimm gave him a clean handkerchief which he threw over his face and appeared to go to sleep instantly. After ten minutes Grimm woke him up with a cup of coffee. He rose, like a giant

refreshed, and continued to argue with Grimm about the identity of Homer.

(James, 1920 as cited in, Rickman, 1979, pp. 26-27)

After the death of his father later that year in 1868, Dilthey accepted a position at the University of Kiel in his home country of Germany. Upon accepting the position, he is said to have begun feeling a greater sense of belonging in his home country and the academic community in general.

Two events are particularly significant in his years at Kiel. The first of these is a somewhat mysterious set of circumstances surrounding his brief engagement to, and estrangement from, a woman by the name of Marianne von Witzleben. It seems that Dilthey felt compelled to break relations with Ms. von Witzleben shortly after their engagement with which he initially appeared to have been overjoyed. He was apparently deeply conflicted about his decision to do so, and felt at the time that this act would resonate with him through to the end of his life. Dilthey (1871) comments on this matter:

The painful consciousness will never leave me that I have become the innocent and, in a sense, blind cause of the great misfortune which happened to Marianne. No friend will ever be allowed to understand the motives of the most important and striking act of my life so that, in this respect, my character will have to remain un-understood for all time. (as cited in Rickman, 1979, p. 27)

It is speculated that the young woman had had a child outside of marriage previous to her engagement to Dilthey, of which he was then unaware. The Victorian cultural milieu and its reservations concerning extramarital affairs in which Dilthey lived may have compelled him to distance himself from her when this was discovered. Whatever the prevailing circumstances, Dilthey appears to have been deeply affected by the event.

The second significant event during Dilthey's time at Kiel was the publication of the first volume of his biography of Schleiermacher. The importance of Schleiermacher's biography as both symbol for, and substantive evidence of the complexity of Dilthey's thought cannot be overstated. As biography, the very nature of the work represented how Dilthey intended to approach both ideas and the history of ideas; historically-empirically and philosophically.

Rickman (1979) reinforces this point:

What made biography so interesting, but also prevented its completion, was Dilthey's conception of what the biography of a historically significant figure, be he statesman or original thinker, should be. Such a man, Dilthey believed, powerfully reflected and even transformed the cultural and social forces which have shaped him.

(p. 31)

Dilthey considered the thorough recounting of the details of individual lives as indispensable to understanding the broader contents of history. This represents a constant in Dilthey's work; the interdependence of historical, empirical, and philosophical analysis in addressing questions about the human condition more generally. Rickman (1979) comments on this:

His attempt at a history of the German spirit, for instance, was intended to provide factual information as well as to clarify the moral ideals of his fellow citizens and point the way for Germany's future. This was, in fact, his most ambitious project, of which the biography of Schleiermacher and essays on German statesmen, poets and musicians, on German law and scholarship...were to form part.

(pp. 31-32)

Dilthey can be argued to belong to the philosophical-psychological domain of psychology. "Dilthey was led to his interest in psychology by his interest in what he called "the life of the

mind” – in what he saw as the mind’s activity in religion, philosophy, the arts, and history in general” (Bulhof, 1980, p. 136).

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, psychology had been undergoing tremendous change and intra-disciplinary divergence, the ideational lineage of which extends back at least to the publication of Christian Wolff’s (1679-1754) *Gesammelte Werke: II Abteil. Schriften Band 3: Psychological Empirica* (1732/2007). “Thus, there existed from this point on two psychologies; empirical – or scientific – psychology, and nonempirical rational – or “philosophical” psychology” (Bulhof, 1980, p. 133). From this divergence emerged a cluster of psychologists whose primary focus was, loosely, consciousness. Bulhof (1980) found that:

Between the traditionalist philosophers and theologians who continued to believe in the existence of a substantive soul on the one hand, and the scientific psychologists, who considered psychology a natural science on the other, emerged another school of scientific psychology: the psychology of consciousness. Its representatives emphasized the special character of the mental as opposed to the physical. They focused on the inner aspects of man, on man’s conscious life, his intentional activities and his self-awareness... In doing so, they retained the concept of the mental as a fundamental category of human life. (p. 135)

In the context of the study of psychology and consciousness specifically, it is significant that “The first representative of the psychology of consciousness was Franz Brentano. In his 1874 *Psychologie vom empirischen Stand-Punkt*, he distinguished between physical and mental phenomena” (Bulhof, 1980, p. 135). As will be shown, Brentano’s work is elemental in the development of Dilthey’s psychology. Dilthey’s philosophical style and conceptual use in the

development of his psychology as seen in this study, further serve to locate him within the broad spectrum of philosophical psychology.

Hermeneutics and Phenomenology

Two philosophical traditions with which Dilthey is closely identified are *hermeneutics* and *phenomenology* (see Rickman, 1979). Both played an important role in the development of Dilthey's broader body of work.

Thematic Introduction to Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics, a philosophical school devoted to the philosophy of interpretation and meaning (see Mueller-Vollmer, 1997), represents a tradition that extends back into late Western antiquity. Although philosophers of the early and late modern period, such as Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (1768-1834) and Hans Georg Gadamer (1900-2001), have come to be identified with the epoch-making moments of this school, the history of the study of interpretation and meaning extends well further into Western intellectual history. Mueller-Vollmer (1997) found that:

Interpretation was performed in various ways since late antiquity, as for example, in the school of Alexandria. It later became an integral part of the theological culture of the Middle Ages, but it wasn't until the Renaissance, Reformation, and thereafter that hermeneutics as a special discipline came into being. (p. 2)

Hermeneutics as a specialized school of thought has its roots in the pre-enlightenment, theologically dominated intellectual atmospheres of late antiquity and the middle ages in Europe. The school only emerged as an institutionally acknowledged discipline as the modern period approached. Supporting this idea, Schroeder (2005) argues that:

the fact that the theory of interpretation (hermeneutics) becomes a distinctive

philosophical movement in the late nineteenth century is hardly surprising. Its task is to clarify the process of interpretation, its legitimate uses, its relation to scientific explanation, its validation procedures, and its value. (p. 149)

Further to this, Mueller-Vollmer (1997) informs us that “concern for hermeneutic problems has become quite common... and the term hermeneutics and its derivatives have been used more and more frequently by representatives of the social and human sciences” (p. ix [preface]).

Pre-modern hermeneutics dealt primarily with the interpretation of text, typically within the context of theology (see Mueller-Vollmer, 1997). Early and late modern hermeneutics slowly expanded the domain of interpretive theory to culture and history.

One historical figure whose work undoubtedly had an influence on Dilthey’s thought was Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher’s writings on hermeneutics arguably belong to the textual tradition of the school. Mueller-Vollmer (1997) informs us that:

Taking his cues from Schlegel’s suggestive insights, Schleiermacher went to work in a consistent and systematic fashion, and thus became the founder of modern hermeneutics. By critically uniting the hermeneutic traditions in Protestant theology and the rhetorical and philological traditions of classical scholarship with the new transcendental approach inherited from Kant and Fichte, Schleiermacher created the “classical” system of Romantic hermeneutics. (p. 72)

A seminal figure in contemporary studies in hermeneutics, whose introduction will serve our discussion well is Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), a German hermeneutic philosopher of the twentieth century and a student of Martin Heidegger’s (1889-1976). Gadamer’s contribution to the body of work that represents the core of contemporary studies in hermeneutics is also central to it. *Truth and Method* (2004), arguably Gadamer’s most known text, is one among a substantial

contribution of work to twentieth century continental thought. Gadamer is thought to have greatly impacted the way modern interpretation is viewed. Schroeder (2005) argues:

Resisting several dominant trends in hermeneutic theory – e.g., assimilating the text to the interpreter, elaborating fixed interpretive methods, and exclusively focusing on author’s intentions – he provides a rich description of the process of interpretation and its effects on the interpreter... He urges interpreters to remain open to textual challenges, allowing them to question entrenched assumptions. (p. 165)

Gadamer’s work also focuses on the hermeneutic study of history, and importantly, the interpretive significance of individual actors, and texts, as historically situated. “The interpreter is historically situated, but so is the text; this gives each participant in the interpretive process a horizon/heritage. As interpretation proceeds, these horizons challenge and interrogate one another” (Schroeder, 2005, p. 165).

Here, Gadamer (1967) discusses the meaning of *historical consciousness*:

When our historical consciousness places itself within historical horizons, this does not entail passing into alien worlds unconnected in any way with our own, but they constitute the one great horizon that moves from within and, beyond the frontiers of the present, embraces the historical depths of our self-consciousness. It is, in fact, a single horizon that embraces everything contained in historical consciousness.

(as cited in Mueller-Vollmer, 1997, p. 271)

Gadamer’s philosophy of interpretation and meaning involve not only the consideration of ideas regarding the conceptualizations and artifacts of others (the text), but the trajectory of history itself. Gadamer theorizes history and our consciousness of it to be a question of meaning in-itself.

Hermeneutics can be thought of as pre-modern and modern. It can be conceptualized as grounded in the interpretation of text, and a historical horizon. The tradition can be seen as focused on interpretations themselves and on understanding of subject matter, both of which extend to an analysis of interpretation and interpretive practices in their own right.

Dilthey and Hermeneutics

Dilthey's interest in hermeneutics arose from a number of influences. "Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutik*, the approaches to history developed by the nineteenth-century German historical school (Savigny, Raumer, Niebuhr, Welcker, among others)" (Mueller-Vollmer, 1997, p. 148). In addition to these theoretical precedents, Dilthey's interest in and knowledge of different fields of study contributed to the development of his hermeneutical thought. "Dilthey's interests and writings ranged over a multitude of subjects... Since he conceived of these as fundamentally interpretive disciplines, practically all of his writings are of interest to the student of hermeneutics" (Mueller-Vollmer, 1997, p. 148).

Collins (1998) traces the ideational relationships between noteworthy academic figures during and somewhat beyond the Enlightenment period. There, Dilthey is placed within an intellectual lineage beginning with Schleiermacher and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), arguably the progenitors of the modern phenomenological and hermeneutic philosophical traditions, through to Eduard Zeller (1814-1908), a nineteenth century German philosopher and historian of ideas.

Zeller is perhaps best known for his extensive scholarship on the ancients (Greco-Roman) and religion. G. Stanley Hall (1844-1924), in reviewing and describing some of Zeller's work, tells us that "Zeller argues, Greek philosophy prepared the way, though somewhat esoterically at first, for Christianity, and supplied the elements for its subsequent rational development to an extent

hitherto unsuspected” (Hall, 1912, p. 30). Additionally, Zeller is reputed for his contributions to the history of German science and philosophy. Hall (1912) recounts:

In his somewhat popular history of German philosophy since Leibniz written as the thirteenth volume of the “History of Science in Germany,” under the auspices of the Saxon commission, somewhat monographic, and mainly devoted to the seven great names from Leibniz to Schopenhauer (both inclusive) ... Zeller urges that the reformation made Germany introspective. (p. 34)

Zeller was and remains a seminal figure in the writing of the history of ideas.

Zeller’s extensive knowledge of the history of Western ideas and intellectual traditions would have proven an ideal influence for the intellectually developing Dilthey, given his interest in historical hermeneutics. Collins (1998) informs us that:

Zeller’s pupil Dilthey formulated a “critique of historical reason.” Dilthey’s distinction of *Geisteswissenschaften* from *Naturwissenschaften* proclaimed new lines of alliance, putting history and philosophy, along with the newer cultural and social sciences, on the side of spirit, where they are investigated with the methods of hermeneutic interpretation, against the sciences of dead matter and their methods of causality. (p. 690)

Additionally, “Dilthey sought to develop a critique of historical reason in the same manner as Kant developed a critique of pure reason for the natural sciences” (Teo, 2005, p. 78). Dilthey’s historical hermeneutics aimed at situating identifiable epochs and traditions within historical horizons. This was necessary in order that the substance of history and culture be intelligible on the grounds of what had come before. Seen this way, consciousness had an historical horizon

from which it drew its intuitions. This meant that the knowledge representative of, or produced within, any given epoch could not be said to exist independent of its historical horizon.

Dilthey's hermeneutic orientation can be described as a concern for the development of an analysis of understanding. In particular, Dilthey set his hermeneutical orientation towards understanding or extracting meaning from life-expressions. Rather than knowing that a person is in state x, pain for example, Dilthey focuses on interpreting the experience of this person, and coming to understand the meaning of this for him or her. Dilthey (1926) comments on this:

Understanding and interpretation is the method used throughout the human sciences. It unites all their functions and contains all their truths. At each instance, understanding opens up a world. Understanding of other people and their life-expressions is developed on the basis of experience (*Erlebnis*) and self-understanding and the constant interaction between them. Here, too, it is not a matter of logical construction or psychological dissection but of an epistemological analysis.

(as cited in Mueller-Vollmer, 1997, p. 152)

According to Dilthey, there are various modes of understanding, each contributing in their own way to understanding the life-expressions which underlie them. "The mode and accomplishment of the understanding differs according to the various classes of life-expressions" (Mueller-Vollmer, 1997, p. 153). Thought and action, for example, would be attended to by different sorts of understanding. This is because the meaning of these life-expressions differ from one another, when the subjective experiencing of them is taken into account. When we examine the phenomenal contents of individual thoughts and actions, they would be conceptualized as expressions in-themselves.

Dilthey theorizes that there are higher forms of understanding. Such higher forms are characterized, primarily, through two distinctive properties of understanding. The first of these is the taking together of individual expressions, and, “by means of an induction from the expressions given.... make the whole context comprehensible” (Mueller-Vollmer, 1997, p. 158). On the basis of the understanding of the various forms of elementary understanding, one comes to grasp all expressions as the product of a certain meaningful context.

The second element of these higher forms of understanding involves drawing “conclusions about the *pattern* [emphasis added] within a work, a person, or a situation” (Mueller-Vollmer, 1997, p. 158). For Dilthey, this means that a higher form of understanding involves not only grasping the context inside which a multitude of expressions are produced. Understanding also requires the detecting of patterns within such a context, or creating an analysis through the understanding of it.

The general categories of interpretation and understanding are essential components of Dilthey’s general method, and are intrinsically hermeneutic in their employment.

Thematic Introduction to Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a thematically diverse school of thought, work from which often differs in its conclusions concerning similar questions. However, the tradition arguably contains core principles which are universal to it. Schroeder (2005) comments on this:

Phenomenology is the disciplined investigation of fundamental structures and features of experience, basic types of experience, and various kinds of objects that are correlated with them. Examples of fundamental structures include the intentionality (or directedness) of consciousness and internal time-consciousness.

(p. 174)

This tells us that a core concern for phenomenology is the description of consciousness and its relationship to the external world.

Using this broad definition, we should consider which psychological features and common types of experience are generally the focus of phenomenologists. Schroeder (2005) argues that:

Examples of basic features include a capacity to transcend the given situation and envision alternatives and an always pre-given world of tools and cultural meanings. Basic types of experience include perception, imagination, action, thought, emotion, volition, ethical responsiveness, aesthetic sensitivity, judgment, reflection, and various kinds of self-consciousness. (p. 174)

Phenomenology tends to investigate these basic features and types of experience within and between objects of consciousness. “Possible objects of consciousness include events, things, processes, images, concepts, projects, propositions, feelings, memories, fantasies, the body, other people, and groups” (Schroeder, 2005, p. 174). As a general set of tasks, “Phenomenology clarifies the differences and connections among these diverse structures, features, types, and objects of consciousness” (Schroeder, 2005, p. 174). Phenomenology seeks to uncover and describe the most essential properties, dynamics, and relational contours of consciousness, towards gaining insight into its nature as it relates to and subsists within these.

Phenomenology is a tradition commonly identified with the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) (see Collins, 1998). It can also be argued to extend back to Hegel, as expressed by the title of his nominal work, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977), whose ideas we will discuss later in this study.

The common identification of the phenomenological tradition with Husserl, is largely because of his development of it as a method for the investigation of the mind and its acts (see Collins,

1998). “Husserl seeks to awaken people from the “natural” attitude by revealing the constituting activity of consciousness as it sustains and engenders the complexities of the experienced world” (Schroeder, 2005, p. 175).

The articulation of the core principles of phenomenology come into relief in this brief outlining of Husserl’s contributions to the field. Dilthey’s employment of phenomenological method resonates with the principles represented in Husserl’s ideas. Identifying that lineage gives us a guideline to understanding Dilthey’s employment of the method.

Since Husserl’s work in the early twentieth century, phenomenology has been identified with, and used in diverse contexts. Well known philosophers such as Martin Heidegger, a student of Husserl’s, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961) have played important roles in the establishing of phenomenology as a prominent school in recent Western philosophical thought (see Collins, 1998).

A concrete example of what is meant by phenomenological analysis, Martin Heidegger’s collection of essay’s entitled *Wegmarken* (1967), includes an essay entitled “Phänomenologie und Theologie” (Phenomenology and Theology) (Heidegger, 1927/1967, p. 45), in which he provides an interpretation of what science is. “Now, let us provide a clue of a formal definition of science: science is the fundamental opening of the formally closed region of Being, in relative terms; Being, makes itself shown by its own will.”¹ (Heidegger, 1927/1967, p. 48) Heidegger describes science as the method through which one attempts to discover or open up Being. This means that phenomenology is a scientific method that has as a central aim the uncovering of an essential phenomenal reality, beneath the empirical appearance of the object world. This more

¹ “Nur als Leitfaden geben wir folgende formale Definition der Wissenschaft: Wissenschaft ist die begründende Enthüllung eines je in sich geschlossenen Gebietes des Seienden, bzw. des Seins, um der Enthülltheit selbst willen.” (Heidegger, 1967, [translation added by author] p. 48)

essential aspect of reality is what is meant by the phrase *life world*, and by extension what Heidegger refers to as the residing point of Being. Phenomenology seeks to look beyond the raw empirical observation of phenomena to discover the essence of these, through reflection and analysis.

It has been shown that phenomenology is a tradition that looks for insight and understanding beyond empirical observation. It implies that those aspects and expressions of mind as manifest in thought, action, or expression more generally, belie a more fundamental, less discreet, pre-articulated conscious reality. It also aims to interpret and re-contextualize emergent psychological antecedents or empirical mental events through those analyses.

Dilthey and Phenomenology

Throughout his career Dilthey had come to incorporate much of Husserl's work on phenomenology. "Undoubtedly the single most important influence on Dilthey during the transitional decade of 1895 to 1905 was Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900-1901)" (Makkreel, 1975, p. 273). Although this was the case, Dilthey's intentions in the employment of phenomenological method diverged somewhat from those of Husserl's. What Dilthey's sought in phenomenology was an epistemological ground on which the human sciences could be founded.

Dilthey wanted to set out definitive principles upon which the diverse branches of the human sciences could be understood and studied. Makkreel (1975) observed that:

Whereas Husserl considered phenomenology as the epistemological ground for all the sciences—the *Naturwissenschaften* and the *Geisteswissenschaften*—Dilthey looked to phenomenological analysis only as a means towards an epistemological foundation for the human studies which would at the same time distinguish them from the natural sciences. (p. 275)

Dilthey's interest in, and employment of phenomenological method was therefore elemental in his conceptualization of the human sciences. He differed from Husserl's thinking on the subject in not envisioning an ostensible foundation for all sciences under its interpretive scope. As will be seen, Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness exemplifies his phenomenological orientation.

Hermeneutic and phenomenological method are seen very clearly in the formulations laid out below. The preceding explication of Dilthey's background in these traditions aids this study in making his conceptualization of consciousness sensible.

The Historical Context of Dilthey's Approach to Science

Specific nineteenth century intellectual currents represented radical transitions from particular variations of *idealism* early on, to the embracing and practice of early versions of *positivism*, and also *naturalism* towards the second half of that century. The tensions and emerging ideas between these theoretical-scientific spheres had great import for Dilthey's body of work.

In addition to the divide between the intellectual currents just mentioned, Ermarth (1978) notes of Dilthey specifically that "He lived through the *Hegelstreit*, *Religionsstreit*, *Materialismusstreit*, *Darwinismusstreit*, *Pessimismusstreit*, and the *Methodenstreit*; it was, as one observer noted in retrospect, "an endlessly strife racked age" " (p. 16). It was through this era of theoretical and scientific upheaval that Dilthey developed his thought. Much of his thought can be said to have been motivated by philosophical-scientific contentions for dominance inside and between competing systems. Ermarth (1978) found that:

In 1873, at about midpoint in a long lifetime... Dilthey gave personal testimony to the deep impulse which dominated his life and work:

The great crisis of the sciences and European culture which we are now living

through has so deeply and totally taken possession of my spirit that the desire to be of some help in it has extinguished every extraneous and personal ambition [*JD* vii].

The tone of urgency and commitment sounded in this passage is repeated throughout his diary, personal correspondence, and theoretical writings. (p. 15)

Dilthey found himself at the crossroads of major cultural and scientific paradigm shifts predominating the nineteenth century. The resolution of those conflicts were to bear out epistemologically definitive implications for how psychology, and science generally, would be conceptualized and practiced in the mainstream thereafter.

The growing tensions between schools broadly defined as idealist and positivist during the course of the nineteenth century represented the basis for significant concern and motivation in Dilthey's work. "The fundamental intellectual crisis which Dilthey was intent upon was glaringly epitomized in the direct clash of various systems of thought stemming from the two traditions of idealism and positivism" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 17).

Idealism should be read as a general theoretical denominator for a series of seminal figures in the history of philosophy and psychology. These are inclusive of, and perhaps most recognizable through the systems of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Hegel, and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814). Although variously expressed by a large number of historically and technically divergent formulations, idealism tends to view the human mind as ontologically connected to universal or objective features of reality. Idealists often interpreted that the human mind was a finite reflection of, or at least directly related to, an objective reality, and at times an *absolute spirit*. Seen this way, the mind was interpreted as having the potential for access to, or was always a part of, objective truths. Such objective truths could range in scope from the forms of the moral and metaphysical, to the object world. In the context of psychology, the idealist's mind was not

to be conceptualized solely as an object of empirical investigation, subject to the laws governing natural phenomena. Ermarth (1978) underscores this idea:

The idealists asserted that the human mind and its creations represent something wholly originaive and unique in the universe – a supernatural almost divine power transcendent to natural reality and experience. Mind or “spirit” (*Geist*), for them constituted the universal condition of reality as apprehended in consciousness. The total, active power of mind defied any treatment analogous to that employed on natural or empirical reality. (p. 18)

Dilthey was expertly familiar with, indeed living in the midst of the continued development of idealist philosophy and its voluminous technical complexities. He was aware of the merit contained in some of its systems, as well as deficiencies which positivists had increasingly begun to accentuate and redress using new conceptual languages and methods.

Positivism was, and generally continues to be, a system of views devoted to the idea that all phenomena can be investigated and ultimately explained using the theoretical precepts and empirical-experimental methods of the natural sciences. Positivist systems are sometimes identified with materialist philosophies of the world. This is the general view that all phenomena can be causally explained through an analytic reduction of manifest wholes, such as physical objects or emergent mental events, to simpler material components. In the latter case, an analysis of neuronal activity might causally exhaust mental events. Materialist leanings were on the ascent during Dilthey’s era. Ermarth (1978) recounts:

In the 1840’s the philosopher Hermann Lotze called for a strictly mechanistic treatment of organic processes, though he did not extend these processes to include the work of the mind and its products. But to many it appeared as if all processes of life,

including the higher operations of thought itself, could be subjected to exact quantitative formulation. (p. 65)

Additionally, “these materialists insisted that their position was merely the “consistent consequence” of the results of the sciences; theirs was not merely a “philosophical” materialism but a truly “scientific” materialism” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 66). Positivism and materialist positivism represent the view that all phenomena can be exhaustively explained through theories and methods which historically demonstrated their value in the systematic analysis of material reality.

In the mid-nineteenth century idealism came to be identified with philosophy in general, as idealist philosophies had dominated the study at universities since at least the time of Kant. Positivism, on the other hand, had become increasingly associated with the new and emerging forms of *natural philosophy*, or ideas and methods of the then burgeoning natural sciences. “Idealism—even philosophy itself—was considered to be in hopeless contradiction with reality and the results of science” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 63).

There was radical departure by the burgeoning natural scientific disciplines of the time, from idealist traditions that acknowledged the privileged place of philosophical method specific to mind and its idiosyncratic nature. Such philosophical traditions had long dominated the theoretical foundations of psychology. This alarmed and agitated Dilthey’s critical intellectual sensibilities. Ermarth (1978) highlights this point:

The only real knowledge was conceived to be rigorously scientific knowledge.

Previous claims for speculative knowledge, intuitive knowledge, poetic knowledge, and knowledge of faith were seen as riddled with contradictions. A reversal had taken place in the structure of the disciplines: whereas previously an overarching

philosophical synthesis took precedence over the individual sciences, now the positive sciences relegated philosophy to a tenuous position of isolation and defensiveness. The opinion was widely voiced that philosophy was impotent and even superfluous.

(p. 64)

Dilthey viewed the seismic shift away from the then dominant philosophical modes of investigation of psychology as premature and misguided. Indeed, it should be emphasized that Dilthey's "thought as a whole is rightly regarded as part of [this] general revolt against positivism and naturalism" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 81).

Although this is the case, Dilthey did not endeavor to underemphasize much less discredit the valuable contributions of the natural sciences. Dilthey's attitude towards science in general was nuanced, and sought balance between methodological traditions. As Ermarth (1978) notes:

it is exceedingly important to recognize that as the ideas for which he had been crusading for years came into general currency by assuming an extreme and doctrinaire cast, he modified them considerably and even assumed a contrary attitude. What may seem to be equivocations and "reversals" on his part are, when seen in the entire context, part of an effort to establish a new balance. This sense of balance and mediation was central to his temperament and to his thought itself. As a mediator, Dilthey was more interested in balance and "unprejudiced vision" (*Unbefangenheit*) than in radical consistency. (p. 88)

Dilthey's positioning at the fault line of a historically radical transition in philosophical and scientific thinking proved both motivating in the production of his work, and influential on his approach to doctrine and scientific scholarship more generally.

Dilthey on Explanatory Psychology

Although Dilthey is well known for his endorsement and interpretation of the human sciences, it is a mistake to interpret this as meaning that he disregarded the relevance of the natural sciences. Dilthey believed that the natural sciences played an important role in the development of knowledge, but considered them only appropriate for specific dimensions of psychic phenomena.

The natural sciences, which Dilthey alternatively referred to as the *explanatory sciences* in the context of psychology specifically, were mostly inappropriate for the study of psychology. Dilthey maintained that natural scientific method fragmented or compartmentalized the psyche into discreet, only interacting parts. This tended to reduce the mind's activity to quasi mechanical, bio-physical operations.

However, Dilthey did not discount what he saw as the very real value of physiological research in psychology, as seen in empirical observations of operations in the brain for example. Dilthey (1977) states of Hermann Helmholtz 's (1821-1894) (a German physiologist of the nineteenth century) research on sensory perception that:

In the psycho-physical domain this mode of investigation led to an extremely valuable analysis of human sensory perception. It was revealed as the indispensable instrument to the psychologist when it is a question of the exact description of inner psychic processes. (p. 48)

The exception Dilthey takes to psycho-physical research and conclusions is the complete subsuming of the former by the latter. Dilthey (1977) contends that the dynamics and expressions of the psyche simply do not correlate with the laws governing physical phenomena:

Now, this physiology provides very effective means for interpreting psychical facts, when there exists no basis in inner experience for identifying the conditions and the

effects it has only to introduce physiological intermediaries having no psychic equivalent. The latter, readily accounting for psychical elements by means of the adopted explanation, are incapable of explaining a phenomenon such as volition.

(p. 49)

Arguably, Dilthey's primary contention with positivist-experimental research in psychology rests in what he views as the drive to "subordinate psychology to the study of nature by means of the hypothesis of the parallelism of physiological and psychical events" (Dilthey, 1977, p. 48).

Dilthey (1977) also points out that in accordance with the hypothesis of the identity of psychological and physical phenomena, hypotheses in the domain of explanatory psychology appear to constantly grow in number in order to account for the multitude of psychic processes observed:

If one considers the course of explanatory psychology, one is particularly struck by the fact that the number of explanatory elements belonging to the cognitive procedure constantly grows. This is the natural consequence of the desire to bring the hypothesis into closer harmony with the living reality of psychic processes. (p. 50)

Dilthey's criticism of explanatory psychology is grounded in what he sees as a phenomenal incongruence between the physical subject matter of the natural sciences, and the idiosyncratic dynamics of the psyche. In examining Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness, the theoretical weight of this postulation will be made more evident.

Descriptive Psychology and the Human Sciences

Dilthey's proposed alternative to a purely explanatory psychology is a *descriptive psychology*. Dilthey prefers a descriptive method for psychology because he theorizes that the dynamics and essential nature of the psyche are phenomenally distinct from natural phenomena. "The concept

of a descriptive and analytic psychology has arisen in us from the nature of our psychic experiences (*Erlebnisse*)” (Dilthey, 1977, p. 51). Such a descriptive psychology would employ the phenomenological and hermeneutic foundations discussed above.

Dilthey argued that psychology, and descriptive psychology in particular should form the foundation of the human sciences. Makkreel (1975) notes that:

Dilthey wrote in his “Ideas” to provide the human studies with a neutral empirical foundation. An examination of some of the important concepts developed in Dilthey’s essay – lived experience, acquired psychic nexus, understanding and description – will show that his psychology was intended to give an initial orientation for the human studies, not an axiomatic ground from which the others could be derived. Psychology would be “first” within the system of the human studies without however, establishing an a priori epistemological grounding for the system of the human studies. (p. 4)

Descriptive psychology was intended by Dilthey to mark the starting point for the human sciences, but not an ideational set of laws through which all other sub-disciplines were to produce knowledge.

Dilthey’s conceptualization of a descriptive psychology suggests an investigative practice which seeks to understand and systematically analyze lived experience. Makkreel (1975) tells us that:

The concept of lived experience is somewhat difficult to define and therefore has often been confused with that of inner experience... lived experience is broader in scope and certainly, does not carry the subjective connotations so often associated with inner experience. (p. 5)

The concept of lived experience refers to the relation between external and internal reality in experience. Dilthey theorizes that the psyche experiences the interaction of internal and external reality as a whole.

The whole of psychological reality is theorized as the starting point of psychology, through which the parts of experience would be analyzed, interpreted, and understood in reflection. Makkreel (1975), accentuating the importance of understanding in this formulation, states that, “in so far as the *Verstehen* (understanding) of psychic life is based on lived experience it can be intuitive and proceed from the whole to the parts” (p. 6). Lived experience, as a central concept in Dilthey’s project for a descriptive psychology correlates with the totality of psychological experience as it is understood, recalled, and expressed by the subject. This suggests the elemental parts of the psyche within a descriptive psychology’s epistemological framework, as ultimately unified. Dilthey conceptualized analysis as the investigative practice that would observe and fix the relations between various aspects and events of mental life, in order that these become sensible in relation to their aggregate totality.

A hypothetical sketch for what a descriptive psychology might entail for a therapeutic context will aid in our explication. If an individual is stung by a bee, she or he might come to associate the image or sight of a bee with that painful experience. Upon reintroduction of that representing the stimulus (a bee), the subject may produce various aversive psychological and affective reactions; increased heart rate, perspiration, a mental plan for escaping the stimulus and so forth. The experience of pain in having been stung by the bee, the sight of the bee, the psychological and emotional state the subject was in at the time of the bee-sting, along with any additional variables which comprise the subject’s experience, taken together, would constitute the lived experience of the event.

In order to describe the subject's experience, Dilthey's program suggests that the investigator examine these various parts. One might include questions such as; was the subject surprised by the incident? What, if any, associations with bees had already existed in the subject's mind prior to the sting? How did the subject remember the experience as observed in describing it and so forth. These and other variables could be counted as parts of the individual's lived experience. The task of the analyst would ostensibly be to determine the most significant aspects of the subject's experience and make sense of the interrelationship between them. Such elements would be analyzed as they pertain to the interpreted meaning of the subject's experience.

The idea of the *Geisteswissenschaften* is not Dilthey's alone (see Teo, 2005). Dilthey views the term as limited because the word *Geist* (spirit, mind, psyche) could be interpreted as limiting the science from other spheres of human life; emotions for example (see Teo, 2005).

For Dilthey, the human sciences are disciplines which systematically incorporate the study of diverse aspects of human life. These are inclusive of history, literature, politics, and economy for example. Dilthey's conceptualization of the human sciences seeks to understand subject matter through the interpretation of socio-historical reality. For Dilthey, "socio-historical reality provides the content of these sciences insofar as that reality has been preserved in human consciousness as historical information and has been made accessible to scientific study as information about society extending beyond its current state" (Dilthey, 1977, p. 76). One goal of the human sciences then, is to understand the psychic interrelationships from within the broad spectrum of human thought and behavior. This is partly accomplished through analyzing the historical trajectory in which subject matter is situated.

The human sciences contain three essential components according to Dilthey. Knowledge of historical fact, knowledge of the substantive content of theory acquired through abstraction, and the proscription of rules on the basis of the analysis of the former two. Dilthey (1977) elaborates:

One class describes reality given in perception. These assertions comprise the historical component of knowledge. The second class explicates the uniform behavior of partial contents of this reality, which are separated out by abstraction. These assertions form the theoretical component of the human sciences. The last class expresses value judgments and prescribes rules. These assertions contain the practical component of the human sciences. The human sciences consist of these three classes of statements: facts, theorems, value judgments and rules. Moreover, the relation between the historical, the abstract-theoretical, and the practical pervades the human sciences as a common fundamental trait. (p. 78)

These sciences have the foundations of historical knowledge and theoretical differences across eras and historical schools in common. They also contain the objective of producing ideas on the basis of the respective theoretical foundations represented by those schools.

Dilthey offers that a central goal of the human sciences should be the detection of universal patterns in various historical eras and spheres of human activity, by means of reflexivity and abstraction. Dilthey (1977) argues that:

The aims of the human sciences—namely, to apprehend what is singular and individual in socio-historical reality, to recognize the uniformities operative in its formation, and to establish goals and rules for its further development—can be attained only through the work of the intellect, i.e., by means of analysis and abstraction. (p. 79)

Dilthey's project is one which seeks to integrate the specificity of historical documentation and scholarship, with abstract universals, which transcend place and time.

Acknowledging the then current practical difficulty in this endeavor, Dilthey (1977) notes that, "The dispute between the Historical school and the abstract approach [of the Enlightenment] arose when the latter attempted such a reduction, and the Historical school ignored the need for abstract knowledge" (p. 79). However, Dilthey (1977) argues that both approaches are necessary in the development of the human sciences, because, "Each particular human science is formed through the technique of isolating a partial content of socio-historical reality" (p. 79). The socio-historical comprehension of such partial contents is premised on the employment of abstract analysis. Therefore, the human sciences should aim at a thoroughgoing employment of both above approaches.

Descriptive psychology aims at the analysis of the parts of the human psyche, through the interpretive lens of the whole, or lived experience. The human sciences presume a substantive continuity between apparently discreet aspects of human endeavor, from literature, to social science, and economics for example, as well as the socio-historical locations of human action and artifact. The general goal of the human sciences for Dilthey, is the establishing of a-historically valid rules and theoretical proscriptions for understanding the human condition. These would be derived from the lexical study of chronological, factual history. The integration of this with the theoretical abstractions developed throughout that history, occurs through the analysis of human artifact and behavior studied by the practitioner.

Both Dilthey's project for a descriptive psychology and the human sciences involve the problem of integrating the reflexively known parts with the experiential whole, the latter of which is always primary. Dilthey (1977) summarizes this ostensible project:

Viewed in this way, the science of anthropology and psychology² provides the basis of all knowledge of historical life, as well as of all rules for the guidance and further development of society. This science is not concerned with man merely as immersed in himself. A human type always stands between the historian and the sources from which he wants to arouse living historical figures; it stands no less between the political thinker, who wants to draft rules for society's further development, and the reality of society. The science of anthropology and psychology strives only to correct this subjective type and render it fruitful. It aims to develop general propositions, the subject of which is the individual life-unit and the predicates of which are all assertions about it that can be productive for the understanding of society and history... In this way a gap in previous systems of socio-historical reality will be filled, i.e., the gap between psychology on the one hand and aesthetics, ethics, political science, and history on the other. (pp. 83-84)

Literature Review – An Extended Introduction to Dilthey's Thought

Presented below are examples of expert commentary from the body of scholarship concerned with Dilthey's most discussed ideas. An appreciable amount of scholarship exists concerning Dilthey's work. It is important that some of the approaches to recounting and interpreting his ideas be examined in this introduction in order to provide a richer theoretical context for what follows.

Dilthey's system of ideas is relatively unique in that its elementary theoretical composites correspond rather directly to its more elaborated formulations. This makes explaining those

² The editors include the footnote; "Dilthey here speaks of anthropology and psychology as a single science devoted to the study of human beings in general. In the German tradition, the two were regarded as virtually synonymous; in Kant, for example, the main difference between them is that anthropology does not posit a soul." (Makkreel, Rodi, ed., 1989, p. 83)

broader ideas important to the central goals of the current study. Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness is present on every level of his thought, in both a direct and inferred way.

To the extent to which thematic overlap occurs in our discussion of the literature being reviewed, our focus will be on accentuating the unique expository contribution each respective commentator provides in recounting and explaining Dilthey's ideas. The interpretive nature of this analysis remains true to Dilthey's general method.

A relatively recent publication by Jos de Mul entitled *The Tragedy of Finitude* (2005) is an example of scholarship primarily concerned with Dilthey's hermeneutics. In addition, the work puts emphasis on the place of Dilthey's work in late modern and contemporary theoretical contexts.

The work begins with a discussion of Dilthey's personal and intellectual background. de Mul provides a thoroughly detailed account of Dilthey's early life from chronology of places lived, studied, and academic posts held. Added to this robust picture of the developing Dilthey is a comprehensive account of his intellectual influences, inclusive of Kant and Schleiermacher, and many others, perhaps less often cited in surveys of his life.

The work continues by providing a detailed introduction to Dilthey's approach to philosophy, and a history of the reception of his work from the time of his writing into the late twentieth century. This first section of the work is completed by providing a thoroughgoing overview of some major figures and main philosophical currents from Kant to Hegel and Fichte, the components of empiricism from Isidore Marie Auguste Francoise Xavier Comte (1798-1857) to John Stewart Mill (1806-1873), and finally a treatment of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Other important schools of thought during Dilthey's period involving figures such as Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886) and Johann Gustav Bernhard Droysen (1808-1884), are also discussed. de

Mul's description and explanation of Dilthey's general approach followed by a summative account of enlightenment and late modern intellectual schools places the latter in a coherent conceptual trajectory. It also provides a thorough ideational context for understanding his main critical stances.

The second section of de Mul's work is a highly technical discussion of Dilthey's hermeneutics of history, ontology of life, psychology, the human sciences, and hermeneutics of metaphysics, or theory of worldviews. de Mul's is a detailed explanation of Dilthey's movement away from orthodox Kantian transcendentalism to a hermeneutic of the subject in history. The work explicates Dilthey's descriptive psychology as an essential aspect of his conceptualization of the human sciences generally, as well as many specific aspects of its formulation. The discussion also involves a recounting of the reception of, and commentary on, Dilthey's critique of the categorization of the sciences, citing a number of prominent figures in the period. Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915), Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936), and Husserl are primary among them. Finally, de Mul explicates Dilthey's ideas concerning understanding and hermeneutics specifically, thematically culminating in an overview of Dilthey's theory of worldviews, or philosophy of philosophies.

The final section of de Mul's work begins with a discussion of Dilthey's ideas in the context of late hermeneutics. There, Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) are the primary subjects of descriptive and comparative focus. The second part of the final section of the text argues that Dilthey's overall thought, and particularly his hermeneutics, are primarily concerned with finitude and contingency in life. Supporting this idea, put forth by Dilthey, de Mul argues that hermeneutics is an indispensable component of philosophy. This is because its

interpretive nature makes it necessary for the description of the conditions of existential finitude and contingency.

Thomas Teo's comprehensive historical and analytic text, *The Critique of Psychology: From Kant to Postcolonial Theory* (2005) includes a section devoted to the human sciences and the critique of psychology specifically, that focuses on many of Dilthey's theoretical stances.

Chapter 5 of the text entitled "The Human Scientific Critique" (Teo, 2005, p. 77) begins by introducing Dilthey's "Ideas on a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology" (Teo, 2005, p. 77). Teo discusses one of this work's central themes. This is the idea that explanatory, natural scientific methodology and theory is in large part inappropriate for the study and description of mental life or psychology. "According to Dilthey, the subject matter of psychology was experience in its totality, which could not be adequately dealt with in natural-scientific experimentation and measurement" (Teo, 2005, p. 77). Teo's account continues by recounting some major figures from the twentieth century who were influenced by Dilthey and his critical hermeneutic-phenomenological position on psychology.

Teo (2005) goes on to describe Dilthey's writings on psychology as a part of a broader project to establish epistemological foundations for the human sciences:

Dilthey sought to develop a critique of historical reason in the same manner as Kant developed a critique of pure reason for the natural sciences. In contrast, he suggested that the anchor for the human sciences was the analysis of human experience, the facts of consciousness, and the mind. (p. 78)

To this, Teo adds the point that Dilthey broadened his focus and scope of epistemological investigation from purely cognitive criteria, to the whole subject. Teo (2005) accentuates this point by recounting that Dilthey wasn't entirely comfortable with the term *Geisteswissenschaften*

“as the term Geist (mind) drew the focus away from the emotional and the motivational sphere of humans, which were as important as the cognitive aspects with which they were completely interconnected” (p. 79).

Teo accentuates that Dilthey acknowledged the relative independence of the human sciences from the natural sciences. Mental life was but one part of the psychophysical aggregate, which was the subject of psychological analysis. To this is added commentary on Dilthey’s proposals for a focus on the socio-historical character of individual consciousness. The role that the socio-cultural and historically objective might take in psychological analysis is also discussed.

Teo (2005) tells us that Dilthey “promoted understanding as the core method for psychology” (p. 79). Additionally, we learn that Dilthey was critical of explanatory psychology for its focus on mental processes or the form of psychological phenomena, in contrast to the normative contents of mental life. Teo also discusses Dilthey’s concept of structure as a theoretical heuristic which puts emphasis on meaning in mental life, for the individual subject and between subjects.

Teo (2005) pays detailed attention to the distinction between the objective mind and subjective mind in Dilthey’s psychology:

Individual meaning and individual mental life depended on the *objective mind* (a Hegelian term) of a given historically situated society, by which Dilthey designated the spirit of a social community or era, as expressed in laws, morality, ethics, and institutions. Individual mental life was influenced by (or better, embedded in) this objective mind. (p. 79)

Teo makes it clear that Dilthey envisioned a productive reciprocity between the individual and the objective cultural-historical context in which she was embedded. The individual was both influenced by, and contributed to, objective history.

Teo (2005) informs us that Dilthey did not disregard the importance and value of research in areas of psychology that were modeled on natural scientific practices in their respective aims and methodologies:

The implicit and explicit critiques of the subject matter of physiological, experimental, and natural-scientific psychology did not mean that Dilthey believed that a sociohistorical understanding of the mind would be completely sufficient. He emphasized that humans were natural beings. He suggested that humans were influenced by nature but also by nurture. (p. 80)

Teo tells us that Dilthey had developed three primary programs for the development of psychology as a comprehensive discipline. The first of these Teo introduces as *content psychology*. This was defined in contrast to a psychology focused on the form and processes of mind, as categorically defined in third person empirical observation. Such a perspective's theory would be inferred from abstracted principles in the examination of brain processes (as opposed to a focus on first person experiential contents of mind).

The second was "a *descriptive psychology* as expressed in his famous *Ideas on a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology* (Dilthey, 1894/1957)" (Teo, 2005, p. 81). As we've discussed, a descriptive and analytical psychology would emphasize the experiential and whole subject of psychological interest. Cognition, willing, and feeling (as specific components of Dilthey's psychology) were to be conceptualized as phenomenally interconnected aspects of the psyche, which only became discrete in practices of abstraction.

Finally, Teo (2005) describes structure and *structural psychology* as a cornerstone of Dilthey's critique of psychology. "Dilthey suggested that a person's mental life was embedded in a context and at the same time influenced this context, which led to an organization of internal

states, which he labeled *structure*” (p. 82). Teo tells us that all three theoretical developments were constructive critiques of the conceptual edifice of the explanatory psychology of Dilthey’s day.

Teo (2005) discusses Dilthey’s use of the concept *Verstehen* as a methodological component in an alternative to explanatory psychology. “Dilthey (1894/1957) considered understanding [Verstehen] to be the most appropriate “method” for psychology, simply summarized in the basic dictum: “We explain nature, but we understand mental life.” (p. 144)” (p. 83). Teo explains that the meaning embedded in cultural artifact and the everyday expression of language could only be understood. This is because of the normative commonality between people that connected those expressions with understanding. In other words, individual and broader cultural, meaningful expressions cannot be exhaustively explained by reductive, psycho-physical forms of analysis.

The distinction between elementary and higher forms of understanding is also discussed in detail in Teo’s account. In this context, empathy as the precondition for the highest form of understanding is elaborated. Teo explains that the re-experiencing of another’s experience in a particular context is a working definition of this idea. Importantly, experience, expression, and meaning are then accentuated as central conceptual components of Dilthey’s critical psychology.

Teo tells us that Dilthey put emphasis on the relationship between generality and particularity in psychological analysis. Individual consciousness was informed by the historical context inside which the subject had developed. Therefore, normative cultural generalities were both possible and needed for a comprehensible set of historical relations and narrative.

In addition to this, the individual represented a unique conscious organization which deserved both theoretical recognition and focused study in her own right. As Teo (2005) more accurately explains:

Dilthey tried to analyze and understand the particular mental totality while aiming for general principles... In fact, Dilthey did not envision a purely idiographic description and understanding of the individual but intended an understanding of generalized individuals. His desire for general results could also be understood in the context of his emphasis on the concept of an objective mind. (p. 84)

Teo (2005) expands on this explication of Dilthey's conceptualization of objective mind by explaining that the latter had suggested the recognition of psychological types as an important component of his psychology. "Particular and individual expressions were not random but could be subsumed under a type because certain basic forms, which one could call "types," reoccur in the process of variations" (p. 84). As examples of the significance of typology in Dilthey's thought, Teo (2005) points to the former's development of the typology of worldviews, and elaborations of his ideas in the work of Eduard Spranger (1882-1963) who "developed types of both personality and adolescent experience" (p. 85).

The final sections of Teo's chapter devoted to Dilthey's critical psychology focuses on the productive influence that the latter's work had in both the German and English speaking contexts of psychology. Teo (2005) found that:

The section devoted to the German speaking context focuses primarily on Spranger, ... whose motivation for a hermeneutic psychology derived from the need to help adolescents who were in psychological distress, and who believed that help could only be accomplished through a process of understanding, the method of understanding was not captured adequately through the concepts of re-experience, sympathy, or empathy with an individual's mental life. (p. 87)

Teo goes on to tell us that Spranger's psychology of understanding was premised on a principle of, or methodological preference for, interpersonal analysis. We are also shown that that such a principle was limited in its scope of historical understanding. Building on the basic hermeneutic principle that one could understand people of the past better than oneself, Spranger argued that the meaningful connections which made up mental life and to varying degrees corresponded with an objective form of valid knowledge, could only be assessed and described inter-subjectively. Further to this, Teo (2005) tells us that "one might understand someone of the same generation, age, or class, but this did not allow for the grasping of the meta-subjective meaning connection (p. 7) that were always involved and were central to a psychology of understanding" (p. 87). Teo tells us that Spranger differentiated himself from Dilthey's emphasis on the analysis and description of the psychological subject as primarily subjective, and cohort specific as a reliable theoretical heuristic for analysis. Teo (2005) goes on to explain Spranger's position in practical terms, noting an example given by the latter:

A simple answer to the question "why does a child like to play?" would propose that a child plays because it is fun to play. If one were to ask a child, she might answer, because she likes to play. If someone responded that a child plays in order to practice future activities relevant to her life, then developmental psychology would have a theory of understanding that went beyond the subjective experience of the child.

(p. 88)

Here, Teo accentuates Spranger's central point of divergence from Dilthey on this methodological issue; the interpersonal and meta-subjective on the one hand, and the descriptive difference between subjective psychological assessments on the other.

Teo concludes this section of his chapter by briefly describing some other seminal figures in post-Dilthey German psychology. Mentioned are Theodor Erismann's (1883-1961) psychology (1924) which focused on the meaningfulness of mental processes, Karl Jaspers (1913-1997) "who more than anybody else attempted a reconciliation of human-scientific and natural-scientific psychology" (Teo, 2005, p. 88). Additionally, Husserl and the phenomenological-methodological critique of positivist-experimental psychology as inadequate for the subject matter of mind and subjectivity is explained. The way in which this critique problematizes the purposes of natural sciences themselves is also discussed.

Teo goes on to discuss Gadamer's critique of Dilthey which focused on the latter's transition from a human science grounded on psychology to one on hermeneutics, and the relative incompleteness of this project. Teo (2005) mentions that Gadamer "rehabilitated the concept of *prejudice* which he saw as a condition for understanding and as grounds from which research was accomplished" (p. 89). Teo (2005) also tells us that Gadamer emphasized "the epistemological specificity of the human sciences" (p. 89), and that the latter's contributions support the positioning of psychology as a human science.

Teo concludes his chapter with a discussion of the role that Dilthey's ideas have played in the English speaking tradition since the introduction of them, more specifically on North American psychology.

This section of the chapter begins by reviewing some criticisms and concepts which were central to the work of Gordon Allport (1897-1967). Teo (2005) tells us that Allport was critical of North American psychology for its adoption of method and epistemology from the physical sciences, "but he could understand the adoption of physicalism and the corresponding machine

model in psychology because of the technological successes of the applied physical sciences and because of the emphasis of technology in American society” (p. 89).

Teo (2005) goes on to explain Allport’s contention that psychology should rather become a human-scientific enterprise “as it was originally laid out in the intentions of a moral science, which recognized morality as a central feature of mental life” (p. 89). According to Teo, Allport (1937) maintained that psychology was “infinitely more complex” (as cited in Teo, 2005, p. 89) than the biological and other physical sciences. The adoption of method and subject models from those domains served to exclude the whole psychological subject from the discipline.

Teo also explains that Allport was critical of psychologists for a focus on method as a primary concern, at the expense of a focus on the psychological subject as of foremost disciplinary importance. Allport worked on developing alternative models for laws and experimentation “while at the same time arguing that some problems of individuality could not be studied by experiments at all. Allport’s focus was a psychology of individuality, which should be idiographic, meaning an attempt to study the particular” (Teo, 2005, p. 90).

Teo follows the above discussion with an examination of Abraham Maslow’s psychology. We are shown that Maslow “characterized traditional science and psychology as mechanistic and ahuman whereby mechanistic meant an emphasis on prediction, control, certainty, exactness, and organization. He suggested that those attributes, taken to the extreme, came within the realm of pathology and neurosis” (Teo, 2005, p. 90). Teo also tells us that Maslow viewed natural-scientific psychology as simplistic and of relatively little value. We are told that its overall positivistic form created an erroneously similar picture of its ostensible contents; a reductive and simplified description and analysis of the human subject. Teo (2005) tells us that Maslow critically viewed traditional, natural-scientific method and its use in psychology as that of the

role “of a spectator as opposed to experiential knowledge. Spectator knowledge lacked participation, involvement, and was intended as neutral” (p. 90).

Maslow critically extended this observation to imply that the subject in such an experimental dynamic was seen as passive, helpless, and causally imposed upon by extraneous variables. These, she or he could only predictably, quantifiably, react to. “Experiential knowledge was focused on experience. The experiential knower in psychology attended to the person’s individuality, identity, spontaneity, and responsibility” (Teo, 2005, p. 90). Teo tells us that Maslow saw experiential knowledge as part of the basis for understanding, an essential point in deepening the comprehension of Dilthey’s descriptive psychology.

In *The Critique of Historical Reason* (1978) Michael Ermarth presents the reader with a comprehensive discussion of Dilthey’s conceptual development, through to his conceptualization of the human sciences and hermeneutics of history.

What tends to distinguish Ermarth’s introduction to Dilthey and the development of his ideas from most accounts, is the special focus of exposition on the latter’s situation in the cultural-intellectual context of nineteenth century Europe. Ermarth explicates in detail a crisis in scholarly and intellectual currents during that time, that centered around growing divisions between schools identified as either positivist or idealist, as we have discussed.

The period beginning with approximately the early middle of the nineteenth century to its end saw much theoretical-scientific devotion to, and support for, idealism wane. Variations on positivist themes and philosophies of science were being simultaneously endorsed by many fields from philosophy, to history, psychology, and other disciplines at that time. Ermarth provides an historical description of these developments as Dilthey was greatly concerned with the growing tensions between, and polarization of, those general currents. Ermarth convincingly

makes the case that much of Dilthey's motivation in describing and theoretically refining the human sciences originates in his concern for this broad theoretical conflict, which tended to be increasingly, mutually excluding and minimizing.

Ermarth's text continues by describing Dilthey's theoretical approach to the human sciences as one that distinguishes cultural and psychological life from objects of natural scientific inquiry. This is shown by way of epistemology and methodological concerns, as we have seen previously. Ermarth (1978) tells us that:

Dilthey insisted that there is a fundamental difference between the natural and the human sciences, the two halves of the *globus intellectualis*. He was, however, intent upon avoiding specious and misleading grounds for this distinction, for such false grounds would return to distort both the theoretical definition and practical procedures of these sciences. After the mid-1860's he insisted that both bodies of knowledge should be considered "empirical," "objective," "factual," and "valid"-- though in a manner constituted (*aufgebaut*) differently within each set of sciences. (p. 96)

This description of Dilthey's comparative conceptualization of the human sciences continues with focus on his employment of experience. This is shown as an essential and distinguishing feature of psychological and cultural life, and therefore the human sciences more generally.

The following section of Ermarth's text is devoted to epistemology in the Human Sciences, and to psychology in Dilthey's work specifically. Ermarth accentuates Dilthey's changing convictions in addressing epistemological and broader scientific questions.

This is done through first discussing Dilthey's proposal for a foundation to the human sciences. At different points in the development of his thought, Dilthey asserted the need for "a foundational science of mind (*Grundwissenschaft*) which would provide a valid theory of

knowledge and “grounding” for the human sciences” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 141). Ermarth describes how Dilthey had initially proposed that anthropology and psychology together comprise a foundational science of mind and the human sciences. This conviction shifted to a preference for the exclusive employment of psychology to provide a *Grundwissenschaft* (foundational science), for at least a time. As Ermarth (1978) recounts:

In the thirty years between 1865 and 1895 his conviction concerning the crucial role of psychology as a *Grundwissenschaft* for the human sciences remained firm despite his growing disappointment with existing forms of academic psychology and the mounting frustration attendant upon his own efforts to reform it. (p. 142)

Importantly, as Ermarth makes clear, whether Dilthey was placing emphasis on then dominant variations of anthropology, psychology, or both to theoretically ground the human sciences, he sought a fundamental science of the mind that would be central to, and sensible in other disciplines. Additionally, Ermarth points out that Dilthey had at times made the analogy between his proposed fundamental science for the human sciences, to mathematics as they stood in relation to the natural sciences, but eventually came to reject this.

It should be accentuated that Ermarth’s explication of Dilthey’s conceptualization of a *Grundwissenschaft* explains that it was to be a fundamental science, as opposed to a universal law or meta-theoretical principle. Such a foundation was not intended to provide an immutable principle or formative law that would complete, or theoretically subsume knowledge production in the human sciences as an aggregate, as was often sought in the natural sciences. Dilthey envisaged an epistemological basis for the human sciences through which its various sub-branches could be epistemologically integrated, through the framework of psychology as a starting point. This epistemic ground could be structurally integrated with each sub-discipline to

investigate phenomena. This would be accomplished from otherwise unique disciplinary vantage points to be continually developed as knowledge was accumulated within them.

In a similar vein, Ermarth points out that Dilthey sought critique rather than outright criticism in the human sciences. This distinction accentuated the role of nuance in the forward development of knowledge production within and between its sub-disciplines. This is opposed to the lawful rejection or acceptance of ideas as is resonant in the culture of facticity of the natural sciences. Ermarth explains that Dilthey viewed the role of logic analogously. Logic was to be a tool for science, and examined in its relation to the mind and its expressions. Logic was not to be permanently embedded at the foundation of a scientific system, which might then reject phenomenal and methodological incongruences as a matter of course.

In addition to these explanations, and as has been shown, Ermarth presents Dilthey's descriptive psychology as something distinct from explanatory psychology. This represented a shift away from an epistemological formalism that imagines the mind as an aggregate of hypothetical localized constructs, to a view of psychology as a study of life as it presents itself in experience. Dilthey's psychology is again shown to be a substantive departure from the positivist currents then increasingly influencing the field.

Ermarth's study continues with a look at some of Dilthey's later work which follows theoretical developments in his project for a descriptive psychology. Ermarth tells us that Dilthey dealt with rather scathing criticisms of his overall conceptualization of psychology and its epistemological status as an academic discipline. Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850-1909), a leading psychologist then at Berlin and an acquaintance of Dilthey's, accused the latter of theoretical duplicity in his distillation of explanatory psychology as constructivist. This is because Dilthey

was critical of seemingly endless hypotheses in the operations of experimental psychology, which he therefore saw as incongruent with the true phenomenal nature of the mind.

Ebbinghaus had argued that Dilthey's descriptive alternative to explanation also depended on hypotheses, as Ermarth recounts. This was because experience and its mental coherence do not appear to be immediately available for conscious representation, and would therefore otherwise require inference as a subject for hypothesis. As Ermarth (1978) explains:

Ebbinghaus found that the difference between description and explanation was more apparent than real, for Dilthey's psychic relations turn out to be as hypothetical as any explanatory schema. True knowledge does not admit such a distinction between description and hypothesis. Hypothesis and explanation are just as necessary in psychology as in any other genuine science. (pp. 184-185)

This critique proved important for both Dilthey and some of his more notable contemporaries. Significantly, it saw Dilthey avoid a major conference so as to not encounter Ebbinghaus, as well as temporarily abandon lecturing in psychology.

Dilthey's response to the criticism of his theoretical foundations was to posit a distinction between the psychic and psychological. "The realm of concrete mental life was redefined in terms of an objective content, whereas the province of psychological science in the strict sense receded into the background" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 186). Dilthey distinguished between an objective, empirical content available to reflexive awareness that could be accessed and explicated in the human sciences (the psychological). This stood opposed to empirically derived structures which required experimental hypotheses that he maintained were constructivist, and explanatory in nature (the psychic).

Ermarth also discusses Dilthey's encounter with the Baden school, which involves some important points of theoretical contention between the former, and significant figures at Baden. The neo-Kantians of the Baden school thought that there ought to be maintained a strict distinction between empirical mind and transcendental consciousness. This implied that all experience had to be premised on, and interpreted through, a priori transcendental categories. This position stood in contrast to Dilthey's assertion that consciousness was an experiential reality, subject to the contingencies of the psychological conditions afforded by experience.

Additionally, the Baden school criticized the characterizing of the human sciences as *Geisteswissenschaften*. "They preferred the term *Kulturwissenschaften* to *Geisteswissenschaften* because, under the pervasive influence of a false and "uncritical" empiricism, "*Geist*" was being increasingly confused or elided with empirical "*Seele*" and even "*Gehirnfunktionen*," or experimentally determinable brain processes" (Ermarth, 1978, pp. 187-188).

One particularly noteworthy exchange on this issue took place between Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936) and Dilthey. Rickert theorized an arguably radical transcendentalism, which contrasted sharply with Dilthey's empirical emphasis on experience in the development and emergence of consciousness. "The "absolute" separation of existence and validity brought some awkward consequences, even in theory. Rickert had to remind his readers that although cultural values are formal and "irreal," they are held by real men" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 192). Both Rickert in his analysis and critique of Dilthey and the latter came to some adjustment in their respective positions, but Rickert more so. Rickert made concessions for experience in the emergence of transcendental values while Dilthey came to admit of the importance of values in themselves. These he saw as phenomenally substantive alongside empirical experience in addressing the study of history in the broad sense. Importantly, Dilthey is also shown to acknowledge the

significance of the Baden school's critique of psychologism. This term refers to the tendency to reduce history and scientifically observable phenomena to operations of the mind, rather than phenomenally substantive in-themselves, and independent of it.

Ermarth's text continues a discussion of the ongoing development and augmentation of Dilthey's theoretical foundations for the human sciences. It is shown that Husserl's phenomenological investigations had important implications for, and intersections with, Dilthey's conceptual groundwork. Ermarth (1978) informs us that:

They both agreed upon the constitutive role of consciousness and the original and un-derivable nature of inner experience. Husserl confirmed that the mind cannot be conceived as a natural object but as an intentional structure which cannot be "explained" causally but can be elucidated in reflection and description. After reading Husserl, Dilthey underscored more emphatically the difference between causal explanation and phenomenological description, or between "genetic" and "foundational" accounts of the knowledge process. (p. 202)

Dilthey had found in Husserl's work a cohesive and undeniably powerful source of guidance and reinforcement for his own ideas regarding the mind and its investigation. "The reception of Husserl was decisive, not because it gave Dilthey entirely new ideas, but because it gave him the logical foundation for ones he had all along" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 202).

Dilthey differed perhaps most stridently from Husserl on ontological grounds. Husserl suggested that a reification of metaphysics was possible for science through the investigation of the a priori essentiality of the world, whereas Dilthey held strong to his conviction in empirical consciousness. This and other points of disagreement notwithstanding, Ermarth makes it clear

that Husserl's phenomenological investigations provided Dilthey with a set of theoretical points of reference and orientation upon which the latter further developed his own ideas.

Ermarth's study describes Dilthey's positioning in the disciplinary-theoretical crisis that German psychology was undergoing in the latter half of the nineteenth century. "The crux of the controversy concerned the question of what precisely is given or presented in human consciousness" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 209). Ermarth recounts that Dilthey had serious reservations concerning the ability of the then burgeoning experimentalism within German scientific psychology to satisfactorily address the issue of the structure of consciousness.

Dilthey was weary of systems which tended towards third person object analyses of psychological subject matter, and forming an epistemology of it on this basis, as we've seen. In addition, as Ermarth points out, Dilthey was skeptical and critical of the then popular enthusiasm for introspection as a method for the investigation of consciousness. Dilthey viewed both tendencies as distorting; "He stressed more emphatically what could be called a kind of indeterminacy principle of mental life: that close inspection alters the phenomenon observed" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 210). Ermarth suggests that Dilthey saw a methodological danger in confusing the object of deliberately isolated and scrutinized psychic investigation, with mental phenomena as it is presented in experience.

Ermarth (1978) points out that Dilthey was somewhat ambiguous regarding the status of psychology as a science towards the end of his life:

On the one hand, he insisted that a descriptive psychology would, if properly realized, contain the "necessary preliminary concepts" (*Vorbegriffe*) for the foundation of a valid *Wissenschaftslehre*. But at the same time, he found that in psychology "there is no agreement on the most important questions" and that putting psychology at the

foundation of knowledge would yield only uncertainty. (p. 215)

Although this was the case, Ermarth explains that Dilthey came to believe that a true content psychology would only be possible when psychological analysis could be combined and reciprocally interpreted through a coherent conceptualization of historical-cultural consciousness. Additionally, in this theoretical distillation of the subject, Dilthey maintained his assertion that consciousness represented an overarching unity.

Importantly, Ermarth's text also includes a section that describes Dilthey's emphasis on structure in consciousness towards the twilight of his career, as discussed in reviewing Teo (2005). Ermarth explains that Dilthey described mental structure as something entirely unique to mental life, having no constitutional analogy in the physical sciences. Dilthey viewed structure as a phenomenologically irreducible set of relations among mental accomplishments such as judgements. Such judgements inhere relative meanings, all of which are contextually interwoven in consciousness. "the structural viewpoint "looks away" from bare impressions to the contextual framework in which they are constituted as meaning: experience always has reference to a whole situation which must be gradually elucidated" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 218).

Dilthey intended the concept of structure as a conceptual depiction of the form and active experiencing of mental contents, as well as a heuristic in describing these. "The human sciences are concerned with mental contents not "psychological" processes" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 218). Dilthey conceptualized individual mental contents as active accomplishments (*Leistungen*) of consciousness.

Structure implies the irreducible interconnectedness of all mental contents in relation to one another, in part because they emerged through the continuity of experience. But individual acts in the detection, analysis, and ordering of mental contents are reflexively distinguishable from

contents, as they are themselves acts of experience. “Such attitudes may vary independently of the content. I perceive, feel, judge, hate, desire: always there is a “what” [ein Was] to which these attitudes relate [BNL 78/66]” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 219).

Dilthey conceptualized structure as a psychologically primordial and empirically conditioned fact of mental life in lived experience. Structure, which the contents of consciousness represent, constitutes an ideal unity which presupposes all expression and novelty in experience. “These contents, however, must not be construed as Platonic essences existing entirely apart from their experiential acts” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 219). Experience constitutes the form and matter of mental life or its structure, and this developing unity represents the premise of mental life. Ermarth accentuates that Dilthey conceived of structure as the unity of mental contents which is always a consciousness of something. Ermarth (1978) further explains the dimensions of Dilthey’s conceptualization of structure:

The contents of experience are structurally related in two dimensions of “depth” and “breadth”; different contents are structured in depth (*Vertiefung*) as stages in the grasping of a single object, or a single content may be related to other objects in a structure of breadth (*Ausbreitung*). The “ideal sum” of these structural relations would be the scientific “concept of the world” (p. 219)

Dilthey conceived of structure as vertically representing the substance of knowledge of individual mental contents, and horizontally as meaningful relations and connections between these. Dilthey thought that an objective picture of this theoretical distribution would provide an accurate depiction of knowledge as a whole.

Ermarth (1978) adds that Dilthey’s concept of structure is not intended as a system for causal explanation in the emergence of mental contents:

If lived experienced is viewed in terms of its content rather than as a psychic act, then its relation to the ongoing coherence of life is more closely analogous to the meaning-relation of a word in a sentence rather than to an event in a causal succession; these relations must be analyzed contextually not atomistically.

(p. 220)

Dilthey distinguished between the contextual location of mental contents, and causal relations between mental acts that generate and order these former. The form which structure took was not to imply causal generation amongst constituent elements relative to other parts, but rather a depiction of meaningful coherence within these.

Further, it is shown that Dilthey emphasized that the substantive dynamics of mental accomplishments within structure was entirely distinct from, and not to be confused with, faculties or localized psychological functions. Dilthey viewed structure as “an immanent-teleological relation of accomplishments” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 221). That is to say that structure is *sui generis*; self-generating and sustaining. Additionally, and by extension, logic and the formal laws of causation which employ it in various ways, was theorized as not capable of exhausting the constitutional nature of mental structure.

For a time, Dilthey’s late depiction of the mind was criticized as psychologistic, and theoretically resistant to describing inter-subjective reality. This criticism emphasized the meaningful balance between subjective judgments and objective ethical considerations. Dilthey’s ostensible reliance on experience as the primary arbiter of structure’s contents, rendered his depiction of the subject as ethically disconnected from a broader culture. But, as Ermarth (1978) explains, this ignores expression as an essential component of Dilthey’s conceptualization of structure. “After seeing his concept of *Erlebnis* misunderstood as purely inward intuition,

subjective feeling, or introspection, Dilthey shifted his theory of mind and re-centered it upon the understanding of expression” (p. 225). Mediated experience, through the examination of expressions of consciousness (language and artifact, for example), and not merely individual experience, was to be included in Dilthey’s broader description of the mind through the concept of structure.

Two related concepts which Dilthey came to employ in the development of his later thought were *reflected experience of life* (*Lebenserfahrung*) and *life values* (*Lebenswerte*). The former “*Lebenserfahrung* is characterized by reflection, articulation, repetition, general acknowledgement (within a community or tradition), and its own peculiar forms of method and proof” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 227). This is a reference to the substantive aggregate of experiences expressed within a community, as well as the historical location of a particular subject. As Ermarth (1978) explains:

The crucial new idea has scarcely been mentioned in existing scholarship; this omission is particularly serious, since Dilthey’s later concept of experience provides the means by which he bridged the sphere of personal experience with the larger realm of culture and “objective mind.” It is precisely this “gap” which critics have seen as the weak point in his thinking. (p. 226)

Ermarth makes the important point that Dilthey’s formulation of the expression of experience is a conceptual bridge between subjective experience, and the traditions, values, and norms or historical-cultural horizon in which the subject lives. “Through this process *Erlebnis* has been clarified, expressed, interpreted, and brought into relation to shared values and transpersonal criteria” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 227). This conceptual step elevates Dilthey’s experiential empiricism

from susceptibility to charges of psychologism and reliance on subjectivity. Communal Erlebnis dissolves the gap between individual experience and socio-historical reality.

Of course, as Ermarth (1978) makes clear, Dilthey would have to address the question of the generation and development of cultural-historical values, and the role personal experience plays in this:

To be experiencing is already a kind of proto-interpretation, for we do not exist *de novo* out of our own immediate subjectivity but rather “live through” life in a vast network of accumulated meanings and life-values. In what might seem a paradoxical or logically circular move, Dilthey suggested that such general experience of life is not only the pre-condition of human understanding, but also its result. Experience of life and understanding are mutually implicated and work together reciprocally to promote ever higher levels of consciousness (p. 228)

Dilthey theorized that culture and the individual play reciprocal productive roles in the development and conscious-historical expansion of each. This is accomplished through the reception of that which is contained in culture, its ongoing articulation, refinement, and recasting into historical consciousness by the individual.

Ermarth (1978) explains that Dilthey accounts for life-values, or what we could alternatively refer to as ethics and morality, culturally normalized, similarly:

These values are made and applied by men: they are not transcendental and a priori. But neither are they personal and subjective, for they have a general validity which extends beyond the personal subject. The historical becoming of the life-values is slower than the becoming of the individual life, and thus they appear to be a priori (p. 229)

Dilthey positions the individual on a historical horizon which contains the gradually generated cultural values of those who had contributed to it before, giving these the appearance of transcendental imposition. Dilthey maintained that cultural values were not from beyond the empirical, but the result of a historical trajectory of concrete ideas and behaviors. The gradual, diffuse, inter-subjective refinement of these through expression resulted in historical and cultural norms.

Ermarth's text continues with a discussion of Dilthey's late rethinking of the question of a foundation for the human sciences. As we have mentioned, Dilthey vacillated on his endorsement of psychology as a foundational discipline for the human sciences. Late in his life Dilthey came to envision hermeneutic reflection between sub-disciplines as a viable starting point for this project. Ermarth (1978) further explains:

But Dilthey's earlier hopes for psychology did not completely turn into disillusionment. The judgment of some older German and more recent American interpreters that Dilthey ultimately rejected psychology *in toto* cannot be sustained. While revisiting his theory of mind to make it more "hermeneutic" and phenomenological and less dependent upon the science of psychology, he also attempted to transform his descriptive psychology into a structural psychology. (p. 235)

Dilthey's late conceptualization of psychology was meant to reflect the most significant development in his thought regarding its description, which was the notion of structure.

Dilthey's assertion that hermeneutic method be considered a starting point in the development of a *Grundwissenschaft* for the human sciences was borne in part in his aversion for totalizing tendencies within individual scientific disciplines. "With a spirit of critical caution and distrust of

all pretense to “absolute” science, Dilthey expressed guarded hopes concerning the future uses of hermeneutics” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 236).

Dilthey regarded the disciplines within the human sciences individually. Their methodological and empirical domains, as well as the bodies of knowledge produced by them were intended to remain independent of one another. “The foundation of the human sciences must take the form of critical exegesis of their major concepts, categories, and methods rather than the form of a single, systematic science” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 236). Dilthey envisioned a hermeneutic-reflective meta-analysis of the individual human sciences and their respective contents. The goal of this was to discover developing methodological and epistemological points of centrality among, as well as overlap between those sciences.

Ermarth’s explication continues with a detailed discussion of Dilthey’s employment of the concept *Verstehen* (Understanding) in the development of a proposed method for the human sciences. Ermarth accentuates a point we’ve visited above, namely, that Dilthey viewed the human sciences as fundamentally distinct from the natural sciences, mainly in that the latter lent themselves to explanation, and the former understanding. Dilthey maintained that understanding could not be exhausted by “logical, methodological, psychological, epistemological, or ontological prescriptions: it may be approached from all these vantage points but cannot be assigned exclusively to any one of them” (Ermarth, 1978, pp. 245-246). For Dilthey, neither philology, rhetoric, psychology, logic nor any other given area of knowledge production exhausts the substance of *Verstehen*; “it cuts across the very differentiation of philosophical areas which have largely set the terms for the definition of knowledge” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 246). For Dilthey, *Verstehen* is a primary feature of mind, not to be further reduced into the modes of investigation it gives rise to through constructive expression and description.

Ermarth is careful to stress that Dilthey characterizes *Verstehen* as an ongoing, expansive capacity which moves in a constant approximation towards general validity about aspects of the world. The more refined aspects of this approximation would be considered hermeneutic in nature.

In describing levels of interpretation, Dilthey distinguished between elementary and higher forms of understanding, as we have discussed above. “Elementary understanding concerns itself with the meaning of simple signs and expressions in an immediate and largely conventional context of reference” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 247). Elementary forms of understanding are relatively determinate, in comparison with higher forms, which are less so. Higher forms of understanding concern broader contexts of meaning than the everyday and remote. These might refer for example, to the interpretive significance of a text for a historical context. For Dilthey, higher forms of understanding signify the expansive topical breadth of the epistemological domain of the human sciences. “understanding reaches across a range of meanings from the stammering of a child to *Hamlet* and the *Critique of Pure Reason*” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 247).

Ermarth tells us that Dilthey conceptualized understanding as a re-subjectification, or a way of re-experiencing the contents of that which is available for interpretation. This is not accomplished through a transcendental teleology of values within consciousness, but rather through the active, empirical encountering of a mind with others, and artifacts of expression, such as books. The mind tacitly understands aspects of its own structure when encountering products of other minds, and internalizes aspects of those expressions according to its individual constitution. In this sense, the mind identifies with and understands the uniquely mental nature and implicit structure of these (artifacts). “*Verstehen* is thus knowledge of the acts, contents, and conditions of mind” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 249).

As we have discussed above, Dilthey also characterized empathy as a mode of *Verstehen*, wherein an individual seeks to understand aspects of other mind's by means of emotion. Ermarth accentuates that Dilthey's conceptualization of *Verstehen* broadly involves the interpretive internalization of aspects of other mental structures, which at times stresses ideas, and at others emotions.

Similarly, "The conditions of historical knowledge are rooted in the conditions of historical life, that is, carried out through active involvement and "lived" participation in common patterns of existence" (Ermарth, 1978, p. 250). We saw this theme in our discussion of Teo's (2005) work above, and will now continue its description.

The structure of mind is conditioned in a historical context, and thus has the potential to interpret and understand historical consciousness as represented in its varied expressions. This is because the minds that produced those artifacts did so in an historical-conscious structure as well. Dilthey's conceptualization of *Verstehen* implies that products of the mind represent a structure, or an individual and historical form. Other minds can come to understand this structure through interpretation precisely because of the phenomenal uniqueness of mental life.

Ermарth makes clear that Dilthey did not theorize the individual subject as embodying an historical era, only representing a unique mental structure and producing various expressions within history, therefore contributing to it. Although "this process of conceptual representation can move to ever-higher levels of abstraction" (Ermарth, 1978, p. 261), in the process of interpretation, it is experience which provides the foundation for the representation of contents which are historical in nature. Ermарth (1978) elaborates:

Every historical epoch develops a "life-horizon" within which personal existence and the collective patterns of social life adapt mutually. The epoch shows a "self-centering"

(*Selbstzentrieren*) in which separate spheres of activity—economic, political, legal, religious, artistic, and cognitive—come into a particular constellation, sometimes loosely called *Zeitgeist*. (p. 266)

In this usage, the term *Zeitgeist* implies a meaningful and culturally substantive, productive reciprocity between the individual and her historical horizon. This can, in the abstract, be reflected in Dilthey's concept of structure. Ermarth (1978) further explains that:

Dilthey insisted that historical knowledge required the employment of an extensive set of specifically historical concepts and ideal-subjects such as social organizations, cultural systems, and epochs. The individual life of the concrete subject participates in these ideal-subjects but is not congruent with them. (p. 266)

The individual interprets and represents ever broader and more refined coherences in the cultural fabric of her historical horizon, which she is a part of, but not exhausted by.

Ermarth (1978) also discusses Dilthey's treatment of the question of objectivity when considering expression, history, and individual consciousness:

History is given only as the summation (*Inbegriff*) of the objectivations of life. These 'objectivations' may be construed as "mind" but not in the purely subjective-personal (or psychological) sense, nor in the pure, disembodied sense of absolute spirit or transcendental mind. (p. 271)

Dilthey viewed the expressions of mind as culturally objective. Here, we interpret culture as a particular, temporal, historical, and geographical location.

Accentuating that products of mind are not substantiated with transcendently conferred, a priori values which proceed from absolute truths, Dilthey held fast to a version of *empirical objectivity*. The structure of the mind is predisposed of a body of cultural knowledge in social

experience, which is barely recognized until reflexively attended to and examined. The substantive convergence between individual consciousness and historical context is uniquely redistributed through the productive expression of mind (everyday language for example), and artifact. Such artifacts as expressions of empirical consciousness, contain to a limited extent the objective structural form and meaningful contents of a particular culture (*Zeitgeist*).

Although this theoretical move may appear paradoxical in the apparent contrast of terms empirical consciousness and objectivity, “Meaning has both a subjective and objective “valance” and in developing his notion of *Verstehen* Dilthey tried to combine the subjective-personal emphasis of Schleiermacher with the objective-impersonal of Hegel” (Ermarth, 1978, p. 275). Dilthey sought an interpretive coherence between, and eventual meaningful articulation of the tacit structure of individual empirical consciousness and the cultural horizon in which it developed.

Tied more closely to pragmatism and the question of subjective action, Ermarth (1978) tells us that for Dilthey “History is neither the play of purely individual activity nor the work of supra-individual forces and institutions but the reciprocal relation of both” (p. 287). For Dilthey, through the substantive structural relationship between the individual and cultural horizon, local truths can be described and pragmatically acted upon.

Ermarth (1978) explains that “Dilthey distinguished three classes of expressions and an order (and criterion) of understanding pertaining to each: (1) scientific and theoretical judgments; (2) practical actions; and (3) expressions of lived experience (*Erlebnisseausdrücke*) in a direct and specific sense” (p. 272). These are significant because to varying degrees the human sciences produce within, and study the products of, all three. For this reason, the question of interpretation and objectivity in the epistemology of the human sciences became a prescient one for Dilthey.

Again, Dilthey maintained a strong aversion to totalizing tendencies within scientific disciplines and any pretense to absolute science was beyond serious consideration. However, Dilthey did propose that a specialized logic, akin to Husserl's phenomenological efforts to comprehensively ground language, would be sufficient and appropriate for the examination of all three categories. Ostensibly, such a logic would itself be analytically characterized as containing aspects of all three categories.

For Dilthey, human consciousness is neither entirely subjective (contingently essential), nor historically objective (essentially historical) in nature. Dilthey theorized that the individual possesses a particular subjective conscious organization, which originates in that individual as an empirical conscious being. Also, the historical context inside which that individual finds herself plays a decisive role in the formation of her unique mental constitution, and as we have described, that horizon can be formulated as an objectivity. As Ermarth (1978) explains:

The fact that the interpreter is limited in perspective by being "in" history—just as his subjects were limited in perspective—does not cancel the possibility of historical objectivity for Dilthey. Objectivity is a matter of asymptotic approximation rather than full identity... There can be no Final Word, unless history itself should come to an end.
(p. 290)

Ermarth informs us that Dilthey viewed human nature as a reflection of the continuous, fluid interplay between subjective consciousness and expression, and the historical horizon in which these are situated. Dilthey viewed history as a continuous unfolding, in and through structurally related empirical consciousness', which uniquely express objects of language and artifact that have objective meaning. The subject participates in history and through the historical objectivity

present in that participation, continually maintains and elaborates the conditions and substance of history.

Ermarth's (1978) work also involves a discussion of Dilthey's considerations on ethics and scientific practice:

Dilthey insisted that *Wissen* and *Gewissen*—science and conscience—cannot be neatly separated in the study of human affairs, Therefore, the ongoing interpretation of the human-historical world is implicated in a larger vision of humanity and what it ought to become. (p. 310)

Dilthey maintained that *Verstehen* allowed the practitioner of (in) the human sciences to approach subject matter from an empathetic and therefore involved rather than abstract point of view, as described above in Teo (2005). This position can be contrasted with the subject externalizing or third-person investigative tendencies typically seen in natural scientific theory and practices. As we have discussed, Dilthey was not given to a rejection of explanatory psychology and its varied contributions to an ever-broadening picture of mind and behavior. However, the distinction of *Verstehen* as a methodological orientation, contrasted with an ostensibly abstract investigative detachment, is an important one in understanding Dilthey's ethical considerations.

Dilthey's concept of *immanent critique* is essential to the question of ethics in scientific practice. The practitioner must identify with both the subject and subject matter, as only a consciousness can to another mind and its products. This must be done while maintaining critical observation of the aspects of analysis under consideration. "Here the reader is brought to re-experience a point of view in order both to understand it and to go beyond it" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 314). The immanent critique allows for the conscious identification with the subject and subject

matter as an end in herself (or itself), while analyzing and comparing the substance of the contents of investigation using historical knowledge. Also, Dilthey viewed this critical process as an arduous and extensive enterprise that required careful interpretive consideration and significant background knowledge.

Dilthey's conceptualization of immanent critique aimed at recognizing and describing norms within the subject or subject matter which are historically objective in nature, and being critical of phenomena on those grounds. Ermarth (1978) explains that:

Immanent critique depends upon the discernment of a norm against which the object is judged. This norm, however, is not an abstract postulate but rather the extrapolation of tendencies which lie within the phenomenon itself. The phenomenon is measured against its own aims and purposes. All genuine interpretation follows the intentionality of the phenomenon but in so doing, it judges the phenomenon against its own terms.

(p. 316)

Dilthey theorized that objective cultural norms could be detected and articulated in the examination and description of consciousness and its expressions. The phenomena under investigation should then be scrutinized on the basis of that analytic intersection. This methodological dialectic demonstrates the two essential points in Dilthey's ethical propositions for the human sciences. The practitioner in the human sciences identifies with subjects and subject matter through *Verstehen*. Also, objective historical norms are identified in this process, clearing ground for investigation inside this dialectic framework.

For Dilthey, immanent critique contributed to the development of historical understanding. As we have discussed, historical understanding is the ongoing process of careful and detailed examination of phenomena in the human sciences. This practice develops ever broader

approximations of culturally objective values and patterns in history. Dilthey intended historical understanding as an objective consciousness of a historical horizon, which was not only useful but necessary.

Ermarth (1978) tells us that Dilthey was critical of theoretical systems which denied the importance of meaningful patterns derived from historical understanding for the relevance of the future:

Schopenhauer dismissed history as “meaningless caterwauling” and reviled the historical sense as a symptom of mankind’s preening self-fascination...The vituperative positivist Eugen Düring likewise viewed history as elaborately contrived but useless baggage...The hostility towards history reached its peak in Nietzsche, who called for willful “forgetfulness” and heroic emancipation from history...The pervasive feeling of a surfeit of history and historical consciousness continued to grow. Max Nordau, whose pessimistic treatise *Entartung* was widely read in the years before WWI, impugned the concept of scientific history as a contradiction in terms (pp. 318-319)

Dilthey maintained a view contrary to these, insisting that historical knowledge was essential to understanding the present and making decisions for the future.

Ermarth (1978) makes it clear that Dilthey was passionate and deeply concerned on this issue. “The ethical and pedagogical value which Dilthey attached to historical understanding led him to counterattack against this new strand of thinking. Like Burckhardt, he regarded disdain for history as a sign of barbarism” (p. 319). Dilthey regarded open attacks on historical understanding and consciousness as philosophically misguided and pragmatically dangerous. As we saw in our discussion on structure in Dilthey’s psychology, individual consciousness was

intimately connected to history, as a participating inheritor of the complex of cultural values and ideas in a given context. It follows then, that denying the relevance and sensible coherence of historical understanding for the present is to deny the value of the contents of consciousness themselves. Because the values and norms present in a given historical framework are an expression of the past, denying the import of historical understanding for the present and future is to deny the content of those values. Ermarth (1978) explains this contention:

The assault upon historical understanding, whether in the name of science, art, myth, will, or even “life,” was symptomatic of a deeper erosion of shared human values and of a dangerous subjectivism:

What man is only history can say. If the mind chooses to lighten its load by casting off history, then it forfeits its mean of living and working. The rejection of historical inquiry is tantamount to foreswearing knowledge of man himself—it is the regression of knowledge back to a merely genial and fragmentary subjectivity
[GS 4:529] (pp. 319-320)

Ermarth explains that Dilthey viewed historical understanding as indispensable for comprehending the present, and creating a future predicated on that comprehension.

Ermarth’s account continues with a description of Dilthey’s doctrine of world-views, which we discussed in our review of de Mul’s (2005) and Teo’s (2005) texts above. Ermarth provides a diverse discussion on the historical - theoretical context for various other world-view formulations, culminating in a detailed explication of Dilthey’s typology; naturalism, subjective idealism, and objective idealism.

Ermarth’s text concludes with a discussion of Dilthey’s historical humanism. The section is intended as a brief commentary on Dilthey’s life and work, and Ermarth (1978) devotes

considerable attention to the difficulty that he, and many others have had in attempting to neatly define and theoretically categorize the former's body of work. "Altogether his project eludes most conventional rubrics, yet he continues to be mustered out as an idealist, positivist, skeptic, irrationalist, historicist, existentialist, or metaphysician *manqué*... Dilthey is still the most misunderstood thinker of the nineteenth century" (p. 342).

Ermarth persuasively makes the case that Dilthey's body of work defies rigid disciplinary definition, partly because the content of his ideas are without prescriptive finality or intractable essentials. "Dilthey yields no easy prescriptions, no comforting prospect of a closed system of explanation culminating in a Final Word. Truth for him was a process, not a proposition: "*Die Wahrheit ist in keiner Formel*" [GS: 9:176]" (Ermarth, 1978, p. 357). Ermarth points towards a historical humanism that he sees as an enduring principle in Dilthey's varied and complex ideas.

One of H. P. Rickman's contributions to Dilthey scholarship *Dilthey Today: A Critical Appraisal of the Contemporary Relevance of His Work* (1988) is a detailed overview of Dilthey's background, central ideas, and includes a section devoted to a Diltheyian critique of psychiatry.

Rickman's text begins with a brief survey of Dilthey's popular legacy, early life, and recounting of his most influential works. Likely because of this brevity, Rickman (1988) makes note of the relative scarcity of biographical information about Dilthey. "Yet Dilthey, although extremely articulate in pouring out, quite literally, millions of words in his scholarly writings, was extremely reticent about his personal life. Indeed, his disciples called him the enigmatic old man" (p. 7).

The work continues with a detailed explication of Dilthey's treatment of the question of historical study. Here, Rickman reviews Dilthey's early work on the biography of Schleiermacher which served as impetus for many of his later developed ideas and was partly

responsible for his interest in history in general, as we have mentioned. Rickman (1988) makes mention of Dilthey's particular propensity towards biography for "He believed in the importance and values of individuals and the intrinsic interest their uniqueness deserved" (p. 18). Rickman goes on to discuss Dilthey's embracing of the historical school in his early approach to the study of history. This emphasized empiricism and rigorous archival industry, as opposed to the imposition of grand meta-theoretical or metaphysical systems onto the unfolding of history. It is recounted that Ranke was an early influence on Dilthey's development in that regard.

Rickman (1988) reminds us that Dilthey elaborated on his interest in, and emphasis on, individuality for a theory of the inner side of history:

We are asked to direct our attention to the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations of human beings that underlie the sequences of observable events and to understand these events in terms of the point of view of the people involved in them. Dilthey fully shared this definition of the historian's task with the historical school, although with the qualification that this could not be the sole point of view from which the historian looks at his subject matter. (p. 23)

This description places focus on biography as an integral aspect of more intrapersonal approaches to the study of history. Rickman argues that Dilthey intended to understand the content of people's beliefs, motivations, and desires as an important aspect of his work. Rickman also explains that Dilthey's formulation of the inner side of history aimed at understanding the minds of other individuals through the examination and analysis of documentation and artifact.

Rickman's (1988) text continues by discussing Dilthey's thoughts on the role that meaning in history played. "Basically meaning arises, according to Dilthey, from the interplay between the human individual and his environment, and from the relationship the parts of one's life have to

each other” (p. 26). At least in part, individual lives represent accumulated meanings which both borrow from, and contribute to, a historical context in which meaning is developed and expressed. Rickman reminds us that Dilthey viewed the close examination of individual lives through biography as indispensable for understanding meaning in history.

Rickman (1988) adds that Dilthey considered the careful analysis and description of individuals in history as a method to grasping and defining a human nature. “The different aspects of human nature and their role in the disparate human activities form the subject matter of what Dilthey called the “systematic human studies” ” (p. 33). Rickman is more straightforward in characterizing Dilthey’s conceptualization of the human sciences as a search for an ostensible human nature than seen in the other scholarship examined thus far. Dilthey understood that establishing a picture of human nature would provide an important component in a theoretical foundation through which understanding meaning in history could begin. Rickman (1988) explains that:

Dilthey could not accept... an absolute morality nor believe that pure reason could provide a universal moral law, he was nevertheless not prepared to accept complete moral relativism, a chaos of conflicting ethical precepts between which one cannot decide, let alone an “anything goes” philosophy. He believed for instance, in the value of individuals and the importance of freedom. He thought such views could be supported by discovering, through the critical scrutiny of history, what human beings have consistently valued, what response to their needs sustains a rich and full human life. (pp. 35-36)

Rickman touches on Dilthey’s remarks regarding intellectual history specifically, suggesting the latter conceived of it as moderately more reliable source material than other documentation.

Rickman explains that Dilthey thought primary source scholarly writings to be more thorough in the explication of their content, which lent them superior archival credibility.

Rickman's text also discusses the role that the systematic study of history played for judgment of the present in Dilthey's thought. There, Rickman explains that Dilthey viewed human life as largely historical in nature, and that awareness of history should allow for the balanced and objective judgment of the present, as well as planning for the future, as was more thoroughly explicated above.

Rickman's text continues with a detailed discussion of Dilthey's hermeneutics and method in the human sciences, much of which we've discussed in detail above, but will structurally outline. Rickman discusses Dilthey's conceptualization of *Verstehen*, expressions and interpretation, and the practical and theoretical distinctions held between explanatory and human scientific practices. Dilthey's employment of hermeneutic interpretive practice with text and artifact are discussed, as well as the additional methodological point that praxis in the human sciences must proceed from complexity. This is one way of saying that investigations in the human sciences should take as their starting point the whole of the phenomenon as it presents itself. This, as opposed to discrete points of analysis abstracted from it in reflection. Rickman (1988) elaborates on this theme:

Dilthey argued that, at the very least, we were not ready to explain mental phenomena in terms of... elemental entities and processes. There is a danger of misunderstanding and misrepresenting complex phenomena when we treat them from the outset as made up and, therefore, explainable in terms of simple reflexes, drives, or capacities. The mind has an innate structure—different tendencies, capacities, feelings, and the like are structurally related to each other and affect each other dynamically.

(p. 68)

Rickman also devotes considerable attention to the practical employment of Dilthey's method, using contrasting examples in contemporary scientific practices to highlight both its continued relevance and complications.

Rickman's text involves a detailed discussion of Dilthey's conceptualization of the systematic human studies, or the formal categories and branches within it. Rickman (1988) elaborates on this:

A list of disciplines comprised within the human studies will provide an initial idea of their nature. To complete such a list is impossible, as new disciplines can and are being developed, but fortunately it is not necessary. A selective list will indicate the range covered... History, psychology, geography, economics, philology, comparative religion, jurisprudence, and the study of art and literature are all human studies in Dilthey's classification. Dilthey also includes philosophy, and this requires separate discussion. (p. 80)

Rickman explains that Dilthey's characterization of the human sciences accentuates the phenomenal interconnectedness of its branches however formulated. In this context, we are reminded that Dilthey conceptualized people as simultaneously self-conscious, historical, and, socio-political beings.

Rickman's study continues with a short discussion concerning this interrelationship, and the concept of mind in both Dilthey's formulations and the human sciences more generally. Rickman underscores that the human studies concern themselves with subject matter which originate in, and are expressed by, experiential consciousness.

Rickman further explains that Dilthey had contrasting views on the relevance of sub-disciplines within the fairly broad rubric of philosophy for the human sciences. We are told that Dilthey supported logic and epistemology as practical and constructive endeavors.

Rickman (1988) continues with a discussion of the question of anthropology for Dilthey and the human sciences. There, emphasis is put on the historical difficulty in summarily defining or outlining a unitary project for the study of humans:

Even if we were able to explain away the grosser contradictions as only apparent, because they deal with different aspects or levels of human life, we would still be left with a large array of assumptions and findings that do not add up to a coherent and meaningful picture of man. We cannot make up that picture from an endless list of human characteristics, even if they did uniquely distinguish man from other creatures.

(p. 94)

Rickman accentuates that Dilthey's picture of the human being is theoretically robust and complex. He discusses the practical and interpretive dynamic between the individual, history and socio-political realities on the one hand, as well as empirical and philosophical-methodological complications on the other. There, Rickman points towards the hermeneutic or interpretive circles both tacit and explicit in much of Dilthey's thought.

Rickman (1988) also discusses *philosophical anthropology* in Dilthey's work, explaining that the latter did speculate on moving towards investigating first principles, insofar as this could "serve and interact with the empirical studies of man" (p. 107).

Rickman's text includes a discussion of Dilthey's psychology. His explication begins with an outline of Dilthey's critique of explanatory psychology and formulation of descriptive psychology. The account goes on to discuss Dilthey's proposals for the study of historical reason

and the culturally available objectifications of life as part of the study of psychology, as we have explained in detail above in Teo (2005), and Ermarth (1978).

Rickman mentions Dilthey's assertion that psychology is essential to understanding the whole of the external organization of society, from law and politics to art and scholarship for example. It is shown that Dilthey theorized that the experiential and phenomenal foundations of these can only be elucidated in the description and analysis of mind. Additionally, Rickman recounts Dilthey's proposal that the study of epistemology be grounded in psychology. This was because the basic way the mind encounters, makes sense of, and analyses the world are results of the relationship between inner experience and thought. "In other words, the processes by which we can gain knowledge are rooted in our mental life as a whole and can be illuminated by psychological analysis" (Rickman, 1988, p. 109).

Rickman's study continues with a brief discussion of some central points in Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness. He begins by stating that "Dilthey's central concern was the unity of the mind. He never tires of insisting that it functions as a whole and provides a context in which individual mental acts take their place. It must be studied as a structure" (Rickman, 1988, p. 111). Rickman goes on to describe the individual, socio-cultural, and historical components of Dilthey's conceptualization of structure and mind (structural psychology), which we have thoroughly explicated above in reviewing Teo's (2005) and Ermarth's (1978) texts.

Rickman's text includes a section devoted to the contemporary relevance of Dilthey's ideas. Specifically, the epistemological status of psychiatry is addressed. Rickman initially tells us that Dilthey never devoted himself to an elaborated critique of psychiatry.

We are introduced to Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), a twentieth century German physician and philosopher, who produced a textbook and other writings on psychiatry. Rickman argues that

many of Jaspers later philosophical writings on the complications in psychiatry (or the clinical context more generally) resonate closely in Dilthey's thoughts on communication, language, and hermeneutics. Rickman (1988) notes that "In his single reference to Dilthey in the *General Psychopathology*, Jaspers acknowledges the link between his own ideas and those formulated in Dilthey's essay, *Ideas Towards Descriptive and Explanatory Psychology*, which was published when Jaspers was a child" (p. 115). Rickman argues for a strong interrelationship between Dilthey's hermeneutics and Jaspers' ideas on psychiatry, in spite of what appears to be relatively little documented evidence of this.

Rickman begins a more thorough conceptual discussion on this subject by outlining some of the central, philosophically relevant problems in psychiatry. In particular he draws attention to the issue of communication in the therapeutic setting, highlighting the various ways in which misunderstanding and misinterpretation can result from complications in everyday language. These include straightforward semantic problems between natural languages, to difficulties with idiom and culturally embedded meanings. Rickman further generalizes the sphere of communication for his discussion to expressions in a broader sense. This draws upon Dilthey's concept of objective mind to accentuate the substantial meaning of the otherwise mundane in language and action. As Rickman (1988) further explains:

The public sphere, consisting of language, conventions, cultural habits, and the like, which we have already encountered as constituting for Dilthey the sphere of objective mind, not only determines the range and richness of the meaning of expressions but also shapes the attitudes expressed in them. The sphere of *Geist* is a constitutive factor of human personality. (p. 123)

Rickman makes the point that psychiatry or clinical contexts more generally, must constructively address problems that may arise through the misunderstanding or misinterpretation of expressions, ostensibly leading to clinical diagnosis. He suggests that a close familiarization with the subject's particular conscious organization is needed for therapy to be effective. This considers the subject's idiosyncratic development, natural language, and cultural framework. An experiential identification with her by the therapist through empathy, as points of departure in genuine understanding and effective treatment, are also shown as required.

Rickman ends his section on psychiatry by outlining some of Jaspers' ideas on the subject, highlighting the resonance of these with some of Dilthey's own. It is explained that Jaspers, like Dilthey, viewed mental states as observable in physical expressions. Also, Jaspers' notion that mental events are felt, as connected in the flow of experience is mentioned. This stands in contrast to inert causal sequences or purely material dynamics between objects, thereby contrasting mental and physical phenomena, which echoes in Dilthey's writings. Rickman concludes this section by recounting Jaspers' conviction that mental phenomena and expressions are deeply embedded in cultural and socio-historical contexts. This bears strong resonance with Dilthey's conceptualization of historical reason and consciousness. Rickman (1988) elaborates on this:

As in Dilthey, mind is the product of the mental activities of individuals; it is invariably given through physical signs, yet it confronts individuals as an independent sphere, containing the language, culture, and beliefs that persist and develop in time, independent of the existence of particular individuals but affecting and shaping them.

(p. 128)

Rickman's discussion on the epistemological foundations of psychiatry outlines some problems of interpersonal interpretation and meaning in the clinical context, and describes the conceptual relationship between a theorist of psychiatry, Karl Jaspers, and Dilthey.

Rickman's text includes an explication of Dilthey's epistemology. There, we are reminded that Dilthey's epistemology is grounded in his formulation of a philosophy of life. By this, as Rickman (1988) explains, Dilthey intended that philosophy should be conducted in the service of life, and that the source of all knowledge is experience in the course of life, or life itself:

The philosophy of life is committed to the belief that all knowledge comes from experience and that the source of this knowledge can be specified as life because that is seen as the sum of our experiences through time... Life as the subject matter of philosophy, the third aspect of what is meant by a philosophy of life, is closely connected with the two other aspects, life to be served by philosophy and life being the sole source of our knowledge. This philosophy is relevant to life because it is about life, and it cannot but be about life because its sole source is life. (p. 133)

For Dilthey, philosophy's conclusions are derived from the varied experiences and expressions of the human mind as an outcome of existence.

As was explained above, Rickman tells us that Dilthey's epistemology, because it rested on a conceptualization of philosophy as an expression of experience, did not rely exclusively on thought, or abstractions within cognition. In addition to thought as a mode of knowledge, Dilthey included willing and feeling, employing a traditional theoretical constellation in philosophical psychology, but applying it to epistemology in a unique fashion. Rickman (1988) found that:

More challenging is Dilthey's claim that the world is disclosed to us not only through our cognitive apparatus but through our feeling and willing. This is implied when,

instead of saying that “thought grasps life,” he insists that “life grasps life.”

(p. 134)

Dilthey’s proposal that the whole of human experience, as theoretically formulated in a unique conceptualization of thought, willing, and feeling, provided a novel basis on which to conceptualize the dimensions of knowledge.

Rickman emphasizes that Dilthey viewed philosophy as an essentially empirical practice, as a consequence of the ideas we’ve been discussing. As we’ve mentioned above, there was a point at which Dilthey suggested that psychology should, if not replace epistemology, merge with its traditional form towards developing an epistemological anthropology. Dilthey did not develop a rigorous methodological or conceptual framework for such a system. Also, he vacillated over time regarding its significance and viability, but it is important that Rickman notes his work on the subject as a unique contribution to epistemology as a study specifically.

Rickman’s text goes on to discuss Dilthey’s hermeneutics in the context of his proposed philosophy of life. This concept directly addresses the aims set out in developing an epistemological anthropology.

A central aim of hermeneutics is the interpretation of parts in their relation to a whole. Dilthey was tasked with designing a method that could address the traditional concerns of epistemology, while remaining coherently bound to a hermeneutic analysis, without committing himself to contravening his theoretical and scientific principles. Supporting this notion, Rickman (1988) tells us that:

This brief account must serve as a description of how the problems of knowledge presented themselves to Dilthey from the point of view of a philosophy of life.

But... Dilthey was not consistent in this. He felt some sympathy for positivism and,

even more extensively, some commitment to Kant's epistemology. This is a conflict he never managed to overcome. There is little dispute on this. Most commentators are vividly aware of this tension. (p. 139)

Rickman (1988) contends that Dilthey's project for a "Critique of Historical Reason" (p. 142) presupposes central aspects of Kantian epistemology. Rickman (1988) tells us that for Kant:

The mind was active in cognition. It organized the raw materials given through the senses by imposing its own structures. The features of the world we recognize as certain are so because they are the ways in which the human mind necessarily absorbs experience. (p. 142)

Kant referred to the a priori structures with which the mind ordered the world it encountered as categories. Rickman (1988) argues that Dilthey postulated necessary interpersonal and historical preconditions for knowledge and understanding analogous to these:

A sketch that singles out the Kantian strains in Dilthey's thinking naturally starts by recognizing as a fact to be accounted for our capacity for understanding meaning conveyed through expressions. The philosophic inquiry then takes the form of seeking the presuppositions involved, the conditions—to be orthodoxly Kantian, the necessary conditions—that make understanding as a process achieving knowledge possible.

(p.143)

Rickman explains that Dilthey endorsed a view of basic experiential and therefore psychological commonalities between people, as constituting a de facto human nature. "The second main principle can be described as the "Vico principle" because it received its classical formulation by G. Vico, who referred to "the civil world," "which, since men had made it, men could come to know" " (Rickman, 1988, p. 143). Rickman argues that Dilthey endorsed a

conceptual framework of human nature composed of psychologically essential, experiential commonalities. These can be seen through the common sources of the expressions and artifacts of human civilization. Such commonalities were seen as foundations for the establishment of necessary categories for knowing the subject of the human sciences.

Rickman's text discusses a basic divergence between Dilthey's epistemology, which centers on experience and phenomenality, and that of Kant's. Kant regarded inner experiences, or states such as joy and anger for example as phenomenal (in his conceptualization of this term), which is to say formally analyzable in the manner of external phenomena. Dilthey, as we will see more extensively in what is to come, rejects this view. Rickman (1988) sketches Dilthey's attitude regarding inner experience. "But when we are conscious of our inner states, we touch the bedrock of reality. The experience of time, the very fabric of our lives, is not phenomenal" (p. 145).

Rickman continues with a brief discussion of the whole subject as cognitive subject, drawing on examples from other prominent thinkers relatively contemporary to Dilthey to provide context on the issue. By whole subject, we are referring to any theoretical formulation that extends analytic primacy for the explanation or description of human phenomena, from cognition and (or) reason as phenomenally autonomous, to other, individual, social, and historical, much broader hypothetical criteria. Rickman briefly examines theoretical difficulties encountered by systems which put emphasis on either the individual or meta-historical explanatory devices such as Marxism, or the individualism implied in Soren Kierkegaard's work, for example (see Rickman, 1988).

One question raised in this section is the ostensible charge of relativism when, for example, autonomous reason and claims to objectivity through rational discourse are called into question

or flatly denied. Rickman explains that Dilthey neither entirely rejected nor embraced many of the ideas contemporary to him, which were often subject to charges of relativism. It is important that these systems also represented departure from traditional cognition-centric conceptualizations of human life. Rickman (1988) explains this tendency:

While appreciating the biological basis of life, he never emphasized it very much in his work, nor did he emphasize the importance of the individual and his choices as much as did Kierkegaard. While acutely aware of the relevance of social and economic conditions, he was not converted to dialectical materialism. (p. 150)

Rickman accentuates a theme we've already seen repeatedly in Dilthey's thought. Nuance and conceptual flexibility when considering systems whose theoretical endpoints may represent untenable absolutes or intractable contradictions.

Rickman concludes his explication with a discussion of reason and the subject, as a consequence of Dilthey's epistemology as it distinguishes from Kantian transcendentalism. To that end, Rickman continues his line of discourse concerning the autonomy of reason and the possibility for claims to objectivity by distinguishing weak and strong challenges to this. The former are described as systems which assert that some conscious aspects of the subject are attributable to factors outside of autonomous reason. The latter are characterized as systems that phenomenally totalize, or exhaust an individual's particular meaningful constitution with external, or phenomenally secondary theoretical devices. These include but are not limited to class ideology, or the primary focus on biological contingencies as an investigative locus for example.

Rickman wants to accentuate the difficulty encountered by Dilthey's epistemology as a consequence of various implications in his philosophy of life. This is because Dilthey wanted to

leave philosophical room for reason and objectivity in scientific pursuits of various sorts.

Rickman (1988) further explains:

We noted earlier that he had been condemned for his compromises with positivism and Kantianism by more radical advocates of a philosophy of life and of hermeneutics. The reason for this tendency was the persistent belief that it was both desirable and possible to provide epistemological foundations that provided criteria for the objective truth of what we considered knowledge, be it in mathematics, science, history, or the social sciences. (p. 154)

Rickman goes on to explain that Dilthey was converted by Kant's theoretical formulation of necessity in consciousness. Briefly, that concept refers to the idea that we can only be conscious of the world because our observations correspond with a necessary, objective order. In other words, consciousness is possible only in, and reveals in its activity, a necessary objective order to which that activity and its contours correspond. "Though I may notice the heat first and the stove afterwards, I know that stoves cause heat, but heat never causes stoves. Though we know about stoves and such from experience we attribute a necessary causal order *a priori*" (Rickman, 1988, pp. 154-155).

Rickman tells us that Dilthey is tasked with reconciling his epistemology, as a consequence of his philosophy of life, which stipulates that experience is the sole arbiter of knowledge, with a view that necessarily locates the form of thought prior to experience. Rickman (1988), while expositing some finer points of Dilthey's on the issue through a series of quotations, succinctly tells us that:

Instead, I want to link it to another quotation, which, dated 1911, might be counted as Dilthey's "last word" on the subject. "Life is not given to us unmediated, but clarified

through the objectification of thought” (quoted by G. Misch in his Introduction to *C.W.*, Vol. V, p. LX).” (p. 156)

This, importantly, designates thought with a more essential role in the ontological order of things. Rickman argues this point by identifying that Dilthey concedes the ontological primacy of experience and existential conditions for knowledge, by stipulating that the contents of this must of necessity be grasped by thought. His second point follows that thought, as the primary intermediary of knowledge, must of necessity correspond to a priori structures which, by definition, are not products of the contents of knowledge. Rickman (1988) elaborates:

If this order or priority is to be preserved, we are forced, after all, to start from the pure cognitive subject—that is, a consciousness that, although it accepts that outside factors ensure its existence and determine the content of its awareness, cannot, without abandoning any claim to knowledge, accept that its operations by which it absorbs and structures that content can itself be conditioned by its existential foundation or its content. (p. 156)

Rickman’s extensive discussion concludes by reassuring the reader that his critical-analytic exposition does not negate the theoretical tenability of Dilthey’s hermeneutic-methodological system. Rickman’s critique leaves theoretical room for the beginning of investigation from complexity, or avoiding fixed analytic starting points. Rickman simply contends that presuppositions about cognitive forms and structure are built into Dilthey’s epistemology, and that, as in all developed epistemological systems, they are impossible to avoid. Rickman (1988) commends Dilthey’s contributions to epistemology as unique and enriching to the field, and “would have preferred him to be more incisively Kantian; I would like to see a working-out of a “Critique of Historical Reason” in neo-Kantian terms” (p. 157). In his text, Rickman

demonstrates that he considers Dilthey's work invaluable to the forward development of the human sciences.

Rudolf A. Makkreel has translated and edited much of Dilthey's original work, as well as written and commented on it extensively. For this reason, it is beyond the scope of our current interests in introducing Dilthey's thought with this literature review to attempt an in-depth explication of his commentary. Instead, we will briefly sketch one of Makkreel's major contributions to Dilthey scholarship: *Dilthey: Philosopher of the Human Studies* (1975). A second reason for this brevity is that many of the broader themes in Makkreel's text have already been discussed in depth above, albeit without the unique and expert interpretation provided by him.

The work begins with an introduction that outlines the role that history and historical reason played in Dilthey's thought. To this is added emphasis on the aesthetic aspect of Dilthey's critique of historical reason. The text continues to describe in detail the human sciences as a disciplinary and historical grouping of sub-disciplines, and Dilthey's conceptualization of them. Additionally, an explication of Dilthey's formulation of a descriptive psychology in relation to the human and natural sciences is provided.

The second section of Makkreel's text is an elaborate discussion of Dilthey's writings on aesthetics, poetry, and psychology. There, an explication of the relationship between imagination, poetry, and psychological analysis in Dilthey's work is provided. This leads to the postulation that aesthetic artifact embodies and demonstrates the unity of consciousness, and the historical nature of the interaction between these.

The following section of Makkreel's text is broadly concerned with Dilthey's hermeneutics and his treatment of history. The work begins by explicating Dilthey's critical hermeneutics of

history, contrasting it with Kant's aesthetic judgment. Following this, Makkreel provides a thorough description of Dilthey's reception and employment of phenomenological method and critical stances in re-evaluating conventional psychology. This section includes a discussion of the contrast between Dilthey's and Husserl's views on this topic. The chapter concludes with a discussion of historical reason and the question of objectivity. *Verstehen*, and hermeneutics, or the problem of interpretation for history more generally are also examined. Also, Makkreel discusses the status of the human sciences in light of Dilthey's historical hermeneutics.

The final section of Makkreel's work begins with an explication of Dilthey's typologies of world views. This involves a discussion of the role that imagination plays in its relationship to experience in the development of individual consciousness. Additionally, Makkreel discusses Dilthey's consideration of a philosophical anthropology in theoretically grounding the categories of life. Makkreel concludes his text with a discussion of experience as providing structure to the fluid continuity of life in Dilthey's thought. In addition, an explication of the notion of style in aesthetic judgment, as a theoretical-categorical tool in attempting historical understanding is given. Finally, Makkreel discusses the implications of these two former sets of ideas for a theoretically tenable hermeneutic of history, as proposed by Dilthey.

In the preceding literature review focusing on selected works by de Mul (2005), Teo (2005), Ermarth (1978), Rickman (1988), and Makkreel (1975) respectively, we've considered and discussed important texts which address Dilthey's historical and conceptual framework. We've reviewed scholarship that discusses and analyses Dilthey's ideas regarding the nature of mind, history, and the relation between these. This examination produced a robust picture of Dilthey's philosophical inclinations.

We've closely examined aspects of Dilthey's ideas on psychology as a discipline and his proposals for it as a developing domain, which also implicated his conceptualization of consciousness specifically. Dilthey's conceptualizations regarding hermeneutics, epistemology, and ontology have been reviewed, in addition to critical interpretations of these.

Additionally, we've described scholarship that compares and critically contrasts Dilthey's ideas with other prominent thinkers regarding pivotal scientific and philosophical issues. Dilthey was shown to consider, oppose, and include much of the content of that discussion in his complex system of work.

Dilthey scholarship is broad and nuanced and would merit a work entirely of its own to adequately address. In this literature review, we have presented a conceptual and historical sketch of Dilthey and his work from a selection of prominent scholars so as to more fluently understand what follows.

The Form and Foundations of Consciousness

The Facts of Consciousness

Experience and Consciousness

A theme both pervasive in Dilthey's theory of consciousness and fundamental to it is experience. For Dilthey, experience represents an essential phenomenal basis upon which mental life is premised.

For Dilthey, the study of human psychology is to be founded on an interpretation of the psyche which embodies all aspects of mental life. Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness includes "the emotional and motivational sphere of humans which are as important as the cognitive aspects and completely interconnected" (Teo, 2005, p. 77).

A description of the historically important term *Geist* will aid us in the explication of Dilthey's conceptualization of experience as an integral aspect of his system. This is because the term *Geist* is central to discussions about consciousness, particularly for the time in which Dilthey was writing, and it connects him to many of his intellectual progenitors.

The German term *Geist* is difficult to accurately translate into English, and has alternatively been interpreted to mean mind, culture, and spirit. Most often though, philosophers of psychology and theoretical psychologists have interpreted the term to refer to mind. (see Collins, 1998)

Dilthey was a student of Hegelian philosophy, and had inherited and interpreted important Hegelian ideas. In order to underscore the significance of this for the current discussion, it is important understand Hegel's particular conceptualization of *Geist*.

For Hegel, the concept of *Geist* was articulated most thoroughly in his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1977). There, Hegel designates and analyses the concept *Geist* in a number of developing,

complex formulations. It is essential for our understanding of Dilthey's work that for Hegel (1977), Geist encounters, or experiences the world as a unified and integrated entity (see Hegel, 1977, sections, A: Consciousness, p. 85, C: (AA), Reason, p. 202, (BB) Spirit, p. 383).

"Similarly, certainty as a *connection* is an *immediate* pure connection: consciousness is 'I' nothing more, a pure 'This'; the singular consciousness knows a pure 'This', or the single item" (p. 59).

Importantly, Hegel (1977) explains the relation of an experiencing consciousness to its object in the world:

An actual sense-certainty is not merely this pure immediacy, but an *instance* of it. Among the countless differences cropping up here we find in every case that the crucial one is that, in sense-certainty, pure being at once splits up into what we have called the two 'Thises', one 'This' as 'I', and the other 'This' as object. When *we* reflect on this difference, we find that neither one nor the other is only *immediately* present in sense-certainty, but each is at the same time *mediated*: I have this certainty *through* something else, viz. through the 'I'. (p. 59)

Hegel describes the ontological instance of experience in the emergence of the self. The self emerges in consciousness as distinct from that which it is not. This essential dynamic will be shown as reflected in Dilthey's conceptualization of self-consciousness as emergent in experience.

Hegel's concept of Geist is both unitary as a phenomenon, and emergent in experience. Hegel locates Geist or mind at the center of his psychological epistemology, and this primacy is essential to our understanding of Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness.

Hegel's conceptualization of Geist does not constitute an exact line of theoretical identity with Dilthey's elaborated ideas, but it establishes an important precedent for the concept of mind

as the former had developed it. Rickman (1988) tells us that, "what Dilthey called objective mind, "the objectification of mind" or "the objectification of life... In this use of "mind" he followed Hegel, but he was anxious to strip the concept of any metaphysical connotation" (p. 83). Dilthey accepted Hegel's concept of objective mind, but did not accept that of absolute mind. This latter bears out the specific metaphysical implication that mind was predicated on an a priori, pre-empirical psychic template.

Dilthey conceptualizes experience as a phenomenal core of consciousness, because he interprets Geist as a primarily experiential phenomenon. In Dilthey's (1997) *Gesammelte Schriften, Band XXI (Collected Works, Volume 21)* the third chapter of section 'A' is entitled "Anthropologie und Psychologie als Erfahrungswissenschaft" (Anthropology and Psychology as Experiential Sciences) (pp. 166-198) taken from lectures given between 1881-1882 at Breslau University, Germany. As this title implies, Dilthey's employment of experience in his conceptualization of psychology is a central concept.

Psychology as a science of experience is also an implication of Dilthey's (1997) assertion that psychological phenomena are fundamentally distinct from objects of natural scientific inquiry:

The psychic experience is different from objects of natural scientific study: It is an experience that the totality of our mind's strength ignites. It is unmediated. Since the sense of mediated truth is a subjective one, it is the actuality of consciousness in truth. Indeed, natural thought indicates psychological conditions that are given individually through expression, but have identical processes in that expression. Science designs a description of psychological life inside which the form is expressed in a lawful manner. (p. 166)

Here, Dilthey gives three primary reasons for his distinction between the psyche and objects of natural scientific investigation. The first of these is that experience represents the basis of the overarching totality of consciousness. The second that psychological reality is unmediated in its expression. The third is that the idea of a mediated consciousness through the apparatus of brain operations is relative, or differs from theory to theory. This implication presupposes a conscious totality underlying each speculative hypothesis. Experience is therefore fundamental in conceptualizing the mind as phenomenally distinct from objects of natural scientific study.

Experience is conceptualized by Dilthey to be at the phenomenal foundation of consciousness. This tells us that his conceptualization of consciousness will have a particularly dynamic form, as the idea of experience is prior to the contents of mind conferred by it.

The Ultimate Fundamental Datum of Psychic Life Given in Experience

The phenomenon of conscious experience is a fundamental feature of consciousness. The *ultimate datum* of consciousness is therefore also predicated on experience. As Dilthey (1989) explains:

Objects as well as acts of will—indeed, the whole immense external world as well as myself which differentiates itself from it—are, to begin with, lived experiences in my consciousness which I here refer to as “facts of consciousness”. (p. 246)

In epistemological terms, consciousness represents that which is present to it in experience.

Dilthey (1989) argues that:

I experience in myself the way in which something (a series of facts) is there for me.

No matter how diverse [these facts] may be that exist in me, what they have in common and what results in their being-there-for-me I call “consciousness”. This way of exhibiting the state of affairs designated by the term “consciousness” helps us

avoid restricting its meaning to representational and intellectual processes. (p. 246)

Note here that Dilthey (1989) disclaims the exclusion of “representational and intellectual processes” (p. 246) from his broader system by telling us that his conceptualization of consciousness will “avoid restricting” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 246) itself to these. Presently, we need only bear Dilthey’s primary argument concerning the ultimate datum of consciousness in mind. The immediacy of experience provides the phenomenal basis of the contents of consciousness.

The ultimate fundamental datum represents the idea that experience and consciousness are phenomenally identified with one another, and represent the totality of the activity and contents of consciousness. The entire substantive contents and activity of consciousness are given in this essential dynamic. Dilthey (1989) elaborates:

All facts have their existence only within consciousness: thus only the facts of consciousness are immediately given and certain for scientific analysis. External reality is only mediately given, as an object given in consciousness, on which consciousness confers an existence external to the self. Conscious psychic states constitute the objects of fundamental philosophy, and these I call “facts of consciousness”. (p. 277)

Dilthey stipulates that the total contents of conscious psychic states are the subject matter of philosophy and, by extension, psychology. This is the ultimate fundamental datum of psychology, that, as seen in the quote above is a theoretical adjunct to the notion of the facts of consciousness.

The Facts of Consciousness Represent the Starting Point of the Description of Consciousness

As with any psychological project or system, a defined conceptual framework is necessary. Dilthey employs the notion of the facts of consciousness as a theoretical starting point for what can become an elaborated description of mind. Here however, it should be noted that we aren't describing Dilthey's point of departure for psychology per se, but rather a theoretical proposition that represents abstract constituents which are its objects. "All facts have their existence only within consciousness: thus only the facts of consciousness are immediately given and certain for scientific analysis" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 277). Dilthey's conceptualization of the facts of consciousness can be considered an abstraction representing the objects of psychology, and theoretically subsumed within the ultimate fundamental datum.

The facts of consciousness refer to the identity of the total contents of consciousness as they represent themselves in experience. In this respect, experience is only reflexively distinct from consciousness. Experience can be retrospectively interpreted as an aspect of consciousness, but consciousness is a continuous experiencing phenomenon. Dilthey (1989) further explains:

For I do not need to become conscious of my consciousness, nor do I need to feel my feeling; I know about consciousness from its very occurrence. The existence of a psychic act and my cognizance of it are not at all separate. The psychic act is because I experience it. (p. 250)

In addition to this explanation of the relationship between experience and psychological acts, as phenomenally equi-primordial, Dilthey (1989) characterizes the breadth of the facts of consciousness this way:

Objects as well as acts of will----indeed, the whole immense external world as well as my self which differentiates itself from it----are, to begin with, lived experiences in my consciousness which I here refer to as "facts of consciousness." The most general

claim that can be made about things as well as thoughts or feelings is that they are facts of consciousness. (p. 246)

For Dilthey, the facts of consciousness embody the totality of what is consciously possible and present to the psychological subject.

It can be said that Dilthey characterizes the foundation of consciousness as a self-evident unity. The ultimate fundamental datum and the facts of consciousness, as intersecting ideas, represent a theoretical depiction of that unity through an abstract formulation of its contents.

The Principle of Phenomenality

Dilthey's Conceptualization of Phenomenality

Given Dilthey's conceptualization of the facts of consciousness, we must establish a psychologically emergent framework for those contents inside which his more general formulation can be developed. The *principle of phenomenality* is a vital step in accomplishing this.

Phenomenality is the concept Dilthey uses to denote the distinguishable aspects of consciousness, as these emerge in the temporal experiencing of reality. Phenomenality theoretically allows for the distinguishable contents of consciousness within a unified totality.

Phenomenality distinguishes between consciousness, and the world around the subject that colors and substantiates experience with its objects and other beings. Dilthey (1989) argues that:

The relationship expressed in the principle of phenomenality is also implicit in everyday consciousness and verbal usage. If the things or persons contained in reality are designated as "objects" and their aggregate is designated "external world", then this involves a relation to an *x* over against which they stand as something external. But we can conceive of no way in which something could stand opposed

as something outer to something inner other than its being a fact of consciousness.

The object is there only for a subject; what stands over against only for a consciousness. (p. 248)

Dilthey theorizes the nature of phenomenality as a phenomenal bridge between an experiencing consciousness and external reality.

The essential distinction between the facts of consciousness and the principle of phenomenality is twofold. Firstly, phenomenality represents the phenomenal foundation of temporality in consciousness. Secondly, Dilthey's conceptualization of the external world demonstrates the need for a theoretical bridge between the unity of the facts of consciousness as embodying all contents of consciousness. The articulable contents of psychic life are represented by the facts of consciousness in the abstract, but are only possible through phenomenality.

The dynamics and aspects of psychic life are products of the emergence of the contents of consciousness, in its temporal situation. Dilthey (1989) accentuates this idea:

We experience the duration of a state, its sequence of changes, as succession.

[This succession exists when something is held together in consciousness.] In any case, the manifold and sequence of changes would have to be conceived as a relation of states that can assume the form of succession. I designate such a relation of series, a form that gives order. From this we get the idea that it is part of the nature of this holding-together to develop a *form that orders the manifold of inner states in a sequence*. (p. 381)

The concepts succession and sequence or order in mental life figure prominently in the concept phenomenality. Temporality is the phenomenal essence in the ordering of the contents of consciousness. The concept of temporal flow at the foundation of the ordering of mental contents

is central to the principle of phenomenality, because it provides the theoretical bridge between abstract psychic datum and an active, experiencing mind.

As phenomenality underscores the temporality implicit in mental life, its significance as a phenomenal category in its own right is an implication of Dilthey's theory. As Mueller-Vollmer (1997) elaborates, temporality bears significance for the essence of the human sciences as a whole:

Thus, the experience of time in all its dimensions determines the content of our lives.

Thus, the doctrine that time is merely ideal is meaningless in the human studies. We recollect past events because of time and temporality; we turn, demanding, active and free towards the future. We despair of the inevitable, strive, work and plan for the future, mature and develop in the course of time. All this makes up life, but, according to the doctrine of the ideality of time, it is based on a shadowy realm of timelessness, something which is not experienced. But it is in the life actually lived that the reality known in the human studies lies. (p. 150)

Temporality is central to phenomenality in that Dilthey distinguishes between the indiscriminate totality of mental contents, and the ordered procedure of experience, evident in its sequential nature.

The Concepts Internal and External in Dilthey's Conceptualization of Consciousness

The concepts *internality* and *externality* are essential elements in Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness. Internal reality refers to the constellation of thought, willing, and feeling. External reality points to what Dilthey designates as the correlate of perception. These are the objects and beings outside ourselves, and the psychic processes which exist outside of our

conscious awareness of them. An explication of these concepts will set an adequate conceptual framework for the upcoming discussion on self-consciousness.

In Dilthey's formulation of the problem, the external world is identified through conscious representation of it, which is given through the mode of perception. However, perception and representation constitute but one aspect of the apprehension of the "real world we live in, the activities by means of which we strive to know, enjoy, describe, and change the world" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 354).

Before engaging a detailed discussion of internality and externality, it is important that we understand the significance and theoretical context Dilthey places these in for his broader project. The essence of perception forms the basis for representational consciousness, but this turns out to be an incomplete picture of how perception correlates with external reality.

Consciousness of the real world or knowledge of the external world, as substantive and causally independent of the psychological self, can only be exhaustively accounted for through an analysis of *self-consciousness*. We will return to self-consciousness as a topic in its own right, but must now introduce the concept as an aspect of Dilthey's more elemental formulations on consciousness.

Representation alone cannot account for the physical and meaningful world which exists outside of ourselves. Self-consciousness distinguishes among the contents of the perception of the external world and the self. Dilthey (1989) elaborates on this dynamic:

(a) Representation. Our perceiving and representing is a seeing that observes properties in continuous space. If we were to abstract from will and feeling and self-consciousness which is established through them, then only this perceiving would exist for us. This is how it would be for a statue equipped only with visual perception.

All representation is therefore like perception, and its residue is a placing-before-me which somehow [contains] elements of space. But this also involves distinguishing something from oneself. (pp. 355-356)

Dilthey asserts that the real world, or the “reality of the [external world]... involves certainty of the highest degree” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 357). Dilthey’s reasoning on this postulation involves self-consciousness as the essential psychic component for a robust and certain knowledge of the external world. Dilthey (1989) explains this stipulation:

Self-consciousness and the recognition of objects independent of or external to us constitute two groups of psychic facts that analysis and the abstraction dependent on it can distinguish. Each can be considered in and for itself, but the one is never found without the other. Indeed, there is a correspondence between degrees and modifications of the capacity to have a lively consciousness of the independence of external objects. They are correlates: they stand in a relation of inner to outer. The inner, pertaining to the self, and the outer, pertaining to the object, belong to each other and exist as facts of consciousness only in relation to each other.

(p. 361)

For the present, it suffices that we understand self-consciousness not as the self-recognition of all consciousness, but as something which emerges from that totality and identifies the self. In part, Dilthey conceptualizes self-consciousness as the experience of that which isn’t external in psychic life, which differs somewhat from consciousness as a phenomenal whole.

Remembering that Dilthey characterizes perception and representational consciousness as insufficient for the recognition of a substantive external world, we now introduce his pairing of perception and self-consciousness as the essence of the recognition of externality. “Self-

consciousness is the correlate of the external world... The one cannot be represented without the other" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 359). Self-consciousness is Dilthey's theoretical key to a robust epistemology of the real world, because self-consciousness is formed in experiencing it, and thus provides to consciousness that which perception alone cannot. "What is given in experience, we call the real world (things, objects, facts, and the real world are thus the correlates of experience). Consequently, I analyze experience when I analyze the real world, and vice versa" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 359).

The external world is always substantive for the experiencing subject, because we are emergent as self-conscious against it. As Dilthey states above, the concept of externality should be understood as certain knowledge about the real world.

This analytic distinction between internality and externality is critical in understanding Dilthey's (1989) broader formulations:

The self is there for us only because it is distinguished from the external world.

The latter, in turn, is there only because it is delimited from the self... The constituents of the psychic processes are independent of that which divides the inner and the outer. (p. 361)

Again, we observe that Dilthey defines the external against the self, but is also careful to distinguish the lawful psychic processes involved in conscious activity from the internal.

Dilthey's formulation of the distinction between the internal and external employs two fundamental concepts; *the will* and *feeling*. The will and feeling are categorically related to experience and self-consciousness. These concepts are essential phenomenal properties in the demarcation of the self from the external world. Dilthey (1989) describes this dynamic:

In experience, the totality of our self places the thing over against itself. This experience

includes the will and feeling. For the will, that which opposes it is something outside-of-it. This can be demonstrated by the sensations of touch and kinesthetic feeling as they are connected with the external world. The will is present throughout the entire body. Thus it locates that which resists the sense of touch, and the movement connected with kinesthetic feeling, outside itself. It places outside itself what it directly experiences as actively resisting i.e., what remains in spite of changes in the will and the movements connected with it. Feeling consists of pleasure and pain inside our body. Over against this region of feeling, another region, where our feelings are not present, stands opposed as external world. For representation alone the opposition of a self and the external world does [not] exist. (p.360)

Dilthey presents the will and feeling as points of origin and boundary for the active encountering of the world. That which the will encounters as resistant to its initiations and intentions is external, as is that which resides outside the threshold of subjective feeling, other people for example.

Dilthey (1989) further explains how representation alone is not sufficient for the recognition of the external world, and why will and feeling are necessary adjuncts to this:

The external world as mere representation is part of representational consciousness, whereas for the will and feelings of the psychic life-unit it transcends this representational consciousness. This can be confirmed by the fact that we can better see things as images if representations related to the will and feelings (and to the corresponding sense of touch and kinesthetic feeling) are abstracted from visual perception, or if the number of such representations is reduced. A direct proof can be found in the way feeling and the will cooperate to produce the constant conviction of self-consciousness, for self-consciousness is linked with the presence of an external world by means of the unity of life in each of its acts.

(p. 360)

The will and feeling provide representation with that which it lacks in the self-conscious recognition of the external world, or experiential substance.

Additionally, this postulation makes Dilthey's assertion about the distinction between basic psychic processes and internality sensible. Because basic psychic operations, associations between events in time for example, occur passively, the actual happening of the association as an outcome of cognition is not subject to the will. Dilthey views such phenomena as essentially different psychic contents than the (internal) self. Of course, these basic psychic processes and the laws governing them are subsumed as aspects of consciousness and are elemental in its totality.

The second component of the distinction made by Dilthey between basic psychic processes and the self also involves the will. Here, we must consider the ordering and sense making of information imprinted in the psyche, as when for example, a mental association is formed between various external stimuli. According to Dilthey, the form which the contents of consciousness take are, in part, a measure of conscious awareness. This aspect also involves the active participation of the will. "Of course, a reflexive awareness of psychic processes is required in order to constitute a self, and sensations are required in order to constitute objects" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 361).

That which is sensible for consciousness as a measure of its contents, is such partly because of the will. We must be careful to note though, that Dilthey (1989) sees this ordering of consciousness as only influenced by the will:

Laws are required for combining the constituents [of psychic processes] through fusion and association without the influence of will, or for unifying and separating them through

comparison and relation. The latter occurs under the influence of the will in the so-called logical operations. (p. 361)

This tells us that Dilthey conceptualizes the will as a necessary but not sufficient component in the development of the form of mental states.

The essential distinction between basic psychic processes and the willful self is one between the form and contents of consciousness. The former requires explanation according to Dilthey, and the latter description. Rickman (1988) reminds us that “Explanation is seen by him – as it still is by philosophers of science – as subsuming individual cases (analyzed into their elements) under general (causal) laws... To this he contrasts what he calls “descriptive psychology” (p. 108). The external world includes basic psychic processes and is to be investigated using explanatory method, as distinguished from the internal.

The ultimate fundamental datum and the facts of consciousness, as distinct but complementary concepts, describe the starting point of Dilthey’s treatment of consciousness through a depiction of the total psychological contents available to awareness. Phenomenality was shown to represent the temporal nature of active consciousness, as well as the manner in which consciousness experiences the world and itself sequentially. The concepts of the internal and external were explained as the point of conscious demarcation for self-consciousness, and certainty of the external world. The will and feeling were shown as essential in this differentiation.

Self-Consciousness

Self-Consciousness: The Historical and Theoretical Context

Dilthey's Treatment of the Historical Significance of Self-Consciousness

In order to appreciate the theoretical gravity of the question of self-consciousness for Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness, we should understand the historical role of the concept as he sees it.

Dilthey (1989) views the appearance of the question of self-consciousness in philosophical inquiry as the beginning of "Philosophy in the true sense" (p. 329). Dilthey (1989) tells us that, "Self-reflection constitutes the central problem of the Socratic school" (p. 329) and that, "The Socratic-Platonic self-reflection encompassed the entire being" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 329). Here, Dilthey interprets the phrase *self-reflection* as a general philosophical mode of inquiry of the self. The famous Socratic dictum *know thyself* (see West, 1979) expresses the general philosophical thrust of this idea.

Greek antiquity represents the starting point of modern philosophical thought for Dilthey. Athenian intellectual life had begun to focus on self-reflection and self-consciousness as central to questions about knowledge in general. Further, Dilthey (1989) tells us that:

Aristotle was the first to describe the facts of self-consciousness. In the subsequent development that culminated in Neoplatonism, this *noesis noeseos* became the basis for an epistemological conception in which the incorporeal nature of self-consciousness was derived directly from these facts of consciousness. (pp. 329-330)

Dilthey identifies Aristotle as the philosophical progenitor of the concept of mind, as independent of body or brain from an investigative point of view. Dilthey points out that Aristotle's characterization of the facts of self-consciousness eventually led to various

metaphysical arguments for the independence of consciousness from the corporeal world. This is indicated by Dilthey's (1989) observation that the "incorporeal nature of self-consciousness was derived" (pp. 329-330) from the investigations into self-consciousness undertaken at the time.

These illustrations of Dilthey's interpretation of Platonic and Aristotelian thought are intended to emphasize the overall importance Dilthey places on self-consciousness. As Dilthey (1989) notes:

Self-consciousness, considered in its connection with the unity of consciousness and in its relation to the will, constitutes the most fundamental point of departure for man's knowledge of the nature and essence of his soul as well as of the world. Seen in this light, it is the key to our knowledge of the world. The source of all metaphysics lies here, and the main problem of epistemology, the problem of being will be solved here, or at least we can begin to shed light on it. (p. 329)

This passage accentuates Dilthey's commitment to the study of self-consciousness as central to the history of Western philosophy. Dilthey views questions concerning self-reflection and self-consciousness raised in Greek antiquity as pervasive and bearing enormous importance for his own conceptualization of consciousness.

Dilthey's Analysis and Critique of Kant's Conceptualization of Self-Consciousness

Self-consciousness was a theoretical issue considered by many in Dilthey's time as a central issue for philosophy and psychology. Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), in many ways an important predecessor of Dilthey's, was instrumental in establishing the then current context for theoretical debate surrounding the question of self-consciousness. Dilthey (1989) notes that, "In Germany, recent investigations into self-consciousness have taken Kant as their common starting point. The theory of pure self-consciousness (or of transcendental apperception) lies at the heart of the

Critique of Pure Reason” (p. 333). Dilthey’s general orientation in conceptualizing the facts of self-consciousness is grounded in his critique of Kant’s conceptualization.

Transcendental apperception (see Kant, 1998), is a central concept in Kant’s theory of self-consciousness. The meaning of this phrase is best grasped by considering how we perceive the world and represent it to ourselves. In other words, how do we form unified perceptions in space and time, among the varied objects in our immediate environment? How do we make sense of the complex groups of stimuli we are confronted with through perception? Kant’s answer to this problem lies in the concept of mental *combination*:

The combination (conjunctio) of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses, and cannot, therefore, be already contained in the pure form of sensible intuition. For it is an act of the spontaneity of the faculty of representation... an act of the understanding. To this act the general title synthesis may be assigned.

(Dilthey, 1989, p. 334)

Kant posits an a priori faculty of combination or synthesis in the mind. The mind, in perceiving the world, spontaneously provides representations of it, as unified. Dilthey (1989), in describing Kant’s conceptualization, accentuates this point. “This ground of combination lies in the original synthetic unity of apperception or self-consciousness” (p. 334). Kant theorized that the organizing and representation forming faculty of mind rested at the foundation of self-consciousness.

There is another crucial element in Kant’s conceptualization of self-consciousness. Kant theorized that the faculty of a priori synthesis or transcendental apperception, is conscious of itself, or its synthesizing activity. Dilthey (1989) explains this dynamic:

To make this intelligible, I distinguish between the empirical consciousness that

accompanies different representations and the fact that I add one representation to another, i.e., spontaneously synthesize them, which then produces consciousness. If I were to attribute a consciousness to the representations, no self-consciousness would arise. Only if the *a priori* activity... is at the same time conscious of its connecting activity in this process can self-consciousness arise. This is expressed in the “I think” that can accompany all my representations. (pp. 334-335)

This elaborate quote points to one essential theoretical component. There must exist a consciousness of the unified representations of the world to and with which they are identified, as an experience of something which is inside or outside the self. Synthetic representations in and of themselves cannot be the grounds for understanding the subject, because the subject must be clearly distinguished from other subjects and objects in the world. The only way this is possible is through conscious awareness of the formation and possession of our representations.

The conscious awareness of the spontaneous combinations our minds perform, put the self in self-consciousness. An *a priori* synthesis gives us unified representations, and our equi-primordial consciousness of this happening outlines the self as the sole location of the representations, namely the subject.

This formulation of self-consciousness exposes a problematic implication of Kant’s conceptualization. Specifically, Kant’s idea that the self is conscious of the spontaneous synthesizing activity of the mind, implies a conscious ‘I’ which pre-exists one’s representations and experiencing of the world. Put another way, if one is aware of the *a priori* synthesis which produce unified representations of the world, then such a consciousness appears to be a parallel phenomenon to the self-consciousness implied there. Dilthey (1989) characterizes this problem by asserting that “Kant also moves regressively toward an objective condition or fact, which

reveals itself in the simple representation “I” and constitutes the presupposition for the connecting activity of a self-conscious I” (p. 335). Kant had, through his conceptualization of self-consciousness, implied the need to explain just how the mind is aware of its own spontaneous activity.

Dilthey (1989) views Kant’s proposed solution to this problem as making self-consciousness, “once again homogeneous with natural phenomena” (p. 336). And, although this is the case, Dilthey (1989) also argued that Kant addressed the question of an ‘I’ observing the self-conscious activity of synthesis, in a manner that made self-consciousness “irreducible in its functions to any spatial coordination and incapable of being integrated into nature, much less subordinated to it” (pp. 335-336). The first of these criticisms implies that Kant had pushed the problem of self-consciousness towards the investigation of psychic processes, the second that no solution was to be found in that theoretical domain. Dilthey views Kant’s proposed solution to this problem as a reversion to metaphysics, rather than addressing the basic implications of self-consciousness as the latter had formulated it.

A detailed explication of Kant’s treatment of this issue departs from our central discussion concerning Dilthey’s conceptualization of self-consciousness. This is because the subject-object distinction established by Kant forms the basis for Dilthey’s departure on the issue. Kant, through his implying of an analytic ‘I’ which would observe the synthesizing activity of an a priori faculty of mind, had set into motion a tradition of discourse concerned with the theoretical integration of these.

The eighteenth century German philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) developed a solution to the subject-object problem implied by Kant’s formulation of self-consciousness.

According to Dilthey (1989), Fichte's proposed solution to the subject-object distinction in self-consciousness is an identification of these, under the general category, will:

Fichte overcomes the one-sidedness of the Kantian theory by finding an action in self-consciousness, by stressing the importance of the will for self-consciousness. The I posits itself. However, the will that is active here expresses itself purely in acts of thought; it is merely constructive, i.e., its act is a [theoretical] construction. (p. 336)

Dilthey proposes that Fichte had theoretically integrated the synthesizing activity of the apperceptive mind with a reflexive 'I', by subsuming consciousness under the concept of will. This was accomplished through conceptualizing will as, essentially, an act of thought that could subsume the object of internal observation within the subject. Fichte sought the solution to Kant's subject-object dilemma through "moving from the distinction between subject and object to their identity" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 336).

Johann Herbart (1776-1841) Kant's successor for the chair in philosophy at Königsberg University, also figures significantly in Dilthey's reading of theoretical developments surrounding self-consciousness during his time. Dilthey viewed Herbart as an important successor to Fichte for the future of psychology.

Central to Dilthey's reading of Herbart is the latter's assertion that Fichte had, in the attempt to solve Kant's apparent contradiction, only maintained it through the positing of a subject-object identity between the 'I' and its processes of representation. Herbart theorized that Fichte's proposed solution to the problematic Kantian formulation was subject to an infinite regress.

Herbart recognized that Fichte, through establishing an identity between subject and object, posed the fundamental problem of how a process of representation could be observed by the subject as a representation. The process of representation which the subject purportedly observes,

is itself represented in the subject, by assumption, through a process of representation. Dilthey (1989) characterizes Herbart's dilemma this way:

An object of self-consciousness, if it is regarded as a representational process, would be part of the representing activity of the subject. *Then the representing has itself as its object* [emphasis added]: that which represents itself would represent itself as representing itself. For every "itself", a self-representer would have to be inserted. An infinite series arises, and in place of a really fulfilled self-positing we have only an eternal quest for the self. (Dilthey, 1989, p. 337)

Here, Dilthey explicates Herbart's theoretical problem by centering the analysis around representation. A self cannot, from Dilthey's point of view, be posited within this formulation, because the representing self cannot be definitively posited as a self-representing ego.

Dilthey (1989) also accentuates the significance of this apparent circularity for self-consciousness in a broader sense. "The subject, this representer that represents itself, must again and again, to attain new knowledge, become the represented. The self-representer must be represented in self-consciousness, and thus a new infinite series arises" (p. 337). This basic problem represents the core of Herbart's theoretical challenge surrounding the question of self-consciousness. In fact, for Herbart, it goes beyond this as, according to Dilthey (1989), "the whole of Herbart's psychology is devoted to solving this problem" (p. 338).

Two points are essential in this context. According to Dilthey, Herbart critically analyzed Fichte's proposed solution to Kant's essential problem by asserting that it expressed a basic contradiction between representation and the representer. Additionally, Herbart had asserted that this fundamental contradiction would result in a circular regress without any solution. As Herbart (1850) states:

We would not advance the solution of the problem in the least... if we were to ceaselessly chase around in the circle formed by these two reflections: ... that the I has need of an object distinguishable from itself, and that the I cannot regard any object distinct from itself as [being] itself. (as cited in Dilthey, 1989, pp. 337-338)

Herbart had inherited a basic problem introduced by Kant. How to reconcile a representing self with representations, the latter of which constitute the foundation of self-consciousness. Dilthey's conceptualization of self-consciousness, indeed the foundation of his psychology as a whole, rests heavily on this very problem.

Dilthey's Conceptualization of Self-Consciousness

Self-Feeling, Reflexive Awareness, and Being-for-Oneself

Dilthey developed a theoretically coherent conceptualization of self-consciousness. He proceeds on this topic from the standpoint of consciousness as a unitary phenomenon. This position stands in contrast to the subject-object presuppositions encountered in our review of Kant, Fichte, and Herbart. There we saw basic contradictions between a posited object of self-consciousness, the synthesizing activity of self-consciousness (Kant), and the proposed solution to this problem (Fichte), which was then further problematized (Herbart).

Dilthey takes up this topic from a premise that is fundamentally divergent from the ideas seen in the works discussed above. Dilthey proposes the concept of *self-feeling* as a core concept in his conceptualization of self-consciousness. Self-feeling represents a simple, fundamental awareness of the self, which is spontaneously felt. "Self-feeling has its firm, active basis in the will, but draws its changing determinations from feeling" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 341). As such, this notion subsumes a fairly broad definition of self-consciousness. Dilthey (1989) remarks of self-feeling that:

Lower animals that feel pain feel it as being their own... Their feelings or desires are in them as their own. We call this fact the “feeling of life” or “self-feeling”, and there is no way to describe or analyze it more precisely than has been done here. (pp. 339-340)

Self-feeling, as the self-evident feeling of one’s existence and consciousness, is Dilthey’s primary step in describing the emergence of self-consciousness.

Dilthey (1989) points out that “The root of self-consciousness, self-feeling, is equi-primordial with consciousness of the world” (p. 350). Dilthey intends that self-feeling is the primary moment of the awareness of conscious life. It is important to note that he grounds this idea in feeling, as contrasted with representational cognition alone.

Here we have a component of a theoretical bridge between the subject-object divide encountered earlier. Self-feeling offers significantly different theoretical premises than those of his contemporaries. Dilthey (1989) comments on this matter:

Subject and object in their opposition are not able to explain self-consciousness, for they *presuppose* self-consciousness, or what is constitutive of self-consciousness, namely, the connection of self and will... For in the process that we call “theoretical” the content becomes an object. Thus, it stands over against the one who apprehends. It doesn’t matter whether an apprehending [process] is represented in the object. As represented it will always be distinct and separate from the one who apprehends. Even what is posited as external is different: a unification is impossible here. (p. 338)

It is important that we take note of Dilthey’s critical emphasis on the term theoretical as a basic problem in his contemporary’s approach to the question of self-consciousness. “Kant [correctly grasped] the two true sources of explanation, reflexive awareness and the unity of consciousness,

but restricted the process in an intellectualized way” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 333). Dilthey suggests that attempts at reconciling the problem of self-consciousness which begin with theoretical abstractions are insufficient for its nature.

In place of what Dilthey implies as an overly abstract orientation in addressing self-consciousness, he offers self-feeling. This point is phenomenal, as self-feeling is part of the experiencing of self-consciousness. It is also methodological as self-feeling is a primary descriptive moment of self-consciousness. Self-feeling broadens the context for departure on the question of self-consciousness, to the domain of feeling, or emotive awareness of the self.

In Dilthey’s conceptualization of self-consciousness, *reflexive awareness* is a secondary component that complements the idea of self-feeling. Reflexive awareness carries a similar connotation to self-feeling, in the sense of feeling as a type of awareness given in the latter, with the descriptive adjunct of reflexivity. Self-feeling is primarily a state of feeling-of-life, whereas reflexive awareness is what one receives in awareness, or does through this. Dilthey (1989) elaborates on this:

Now I will specify the sense in which I am using the term “inner perception.” This concept is the correlate of the concept “fact of consciousness.” Every fact which is apprehended as given in myself, i.e., perceived as existing in my consciousness, is grasped in inner perception. This is the case when I begin with the reflexive awareness of a state or an act which can then enter into a relation with, and even fuse with, an outer perception. (p. 269)

Reflexive awareness is the act of becoming self-conscious through the reflexivity of experienced psychological states, and aspects of inner and outer reality.

Self-feeling and reflexive awareness are intersecting descriptions of the same act within the mind that phenomenally mediates self-consciousness. Reflexive awareness is Dilthey's way of describing what self-feeling does; it is to become reflexively aware of one's existence, as a subject that is self-conscious. "What we have a reflexive awareness of what in feeling and exertion is perceived by the sense of touch as something external" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 343). As Dilthey (1989) further explains:

That the experience of the contact of one's own life with things takes place in this act of reflexive awareness is shown most clearly in self-feeling; for the way we feel is, so to speak, determined by a mental judgment about our own power of interacting with what in fact affects us from without or should affect us. (p. 340)

Self-feeling and reflexive awareness are two descriptive sides of a unitary psychic phenomenon.

We are now concerned with describing a concept that embodies what has been said about consciousness as a unitary experiential phenomenon. *Being-for-oneself* is the concept employed by Dilthey to fill this criterion. Dilthey (1989) describes reflexive awareness in the context of being-for-oneself this way:

Being-for-oneself as reflexive awareness is the simple nature of the psychic process insofar as this is not mere absorption in an object, but lived experience. It is the foundation of what we call life as such, its most primordial seed, and at the same time it contains the formative law of self-consciousness. (p. 338)

Dilthey proposes that self-consciousness is phenomenally commensurate with the ontological primacy of existence itself. "Existence itself, reality, being—these are only expressions for the way in which my consciousness possesses its impressions and representations" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 246). Dilthey's formulation of self-consciousness and, by extension, consciousness is more

ontologically primary than the dynamics of the various active properties of the psyche. Through the concept of being-for-oneself, Dilthey locates the problem of self-consciousness within the primacy of existence itself. For the subject, to exist is to possess self-consciousness.

It is in this same respect that being-for-oneself contains self-feeling and reflexive awareness. Where we have defined reflexive awareness as the active dimension of self-feeling, these must both be predicated on a state from which self-consciousness can emerge; being-for-oneself satisfies this criterion. Being-for-oneself is the theoretical postulation for a state of being, inside which self-consciousness is emergent through awareness.

Self-consciousness emerges in the instance of the reflexive awareness of one's particular psychological state, which identifies itself with that state, and bounds it off from the external. The self is descriptively differentiated from the representations and object relations within the psyche, which express the various aspects of psychological states. Dilthey (1989) comments on this:

The reflexive awareness of impulses of the will and facts of feeling allows what we experience about things to separate a sphere of our feelings and spontaneity from a sphere of objects.... At the same time, this fact provides the basis for explaining the particular way in which we compare what we apprehend immediately in reflexive awareness to what we posit, within the same act, as outside of ourselves.... It is not merely something-in-us and something-outside-us that we distinguish in this act.... What we call "ours" receives its stamp from this reflexive awareness of feeling, longing, and states of will. What we possess in reflexive awareness we call "life" or "lived experience" to indicate its difference from what is outside us. If someone ought to extinguish his self in order to see things as they really are, the very urge to see would vanish as well. For the added element of lived experience, which spills

over from the self onto the world of objects, especially in the direct awareness of the historical, is what makes it worth seeing at all. Only in this self-feeling, in the being-for-oneself, does the characteristic coloring of representations as “mine” or “ours” occur, and this is what we call life. (p. 340)

Being-for-oneself is a conceptual representation for the state of existence, which self-feeling and reflexive awareness mediate as self-consciousness.

Self-feeling, reflexive awareness, and being-for-oneself are discursively distinguished in Dilthey’s theory. However, these are integrated aspects of a phenomenal unity. Dilthey (1989) reinforces this idea:

Being-for-oneself as reflexive awareness is the simple nature of the psychic process insofar as this is not mere absorption in an object, but lived experience. It is the foundation of what we call life as such, its most primordial seed, and at the same time it contains the formative law of self-consciousness. This reflexive awareness, in which an individual possesses his own states, can also be termed self-feeling, though it includes more, as the term indicates. This fact contains the core of self-consciousness. (pp. 338-339)

Being-for-oneself describes Dilthey’s irreducible foundation for self-consciousness. It represents the ontological boundary of the self, inside which reflexive awareness and self-feeling give expression to self-consciousness against the reality of the external world.

Subject and Object in Dilthey’s Conceptualization of Self-Consciousness

Dilthey’s proposals for the theoretical foundations of self-consciousness can now be employed to address his treatment of the subject-object problem. The analytic distinction made

by Kant and others between subject and object within consciousness is not a fundamental problem for Dilthey's formulation, although he acknowledges the existence of the distinction.

Kant and others, particularly Herbart, vigorously sought the solution to this problem, shown in the theoretical elaborations discussed above. What is central to Kant's, Fichte's, and Herbart's approach to this question is the positing of an analytic 'I' or ego within consciousness that observes its own psychological processes, or is always aware of these. Dilthey, by contrast, employs self-feeling, reflexive awareness, and being-for-oneself and their attendant phenomenal properties as the basis for his theory of self-consciousness.

Dilthey's theory on self-consciousness presupposes the rejection of reflexive difference between subject and object within consciousness. This assertion can be made clear by way of a direct comparison between the theoretical foundations seen in Kant's, Fichte's, and Herbart's systems, and the implications of Dilthey's concepts self-feeling, reflexive awareness, and being-for-oneself.

Dilthey's foundations presuppose the unity of self-consciousness with consciousness. The differentiating between these can only be accomplished functionally, or through thought and representation. Dilthey (1989) reinforces this point in stating that, "Reflexive awareness is the primary fact of being-for-oneself, which, as life itself, contains no distinction between subject and object, but rather forms their foundation. This being true, we must regard subject and object in terms of a developmental history" (p. 339). Dilthey outlines the essential distinction between his foundations and those generally following the Kantian line. Subject and object as a dynamic within individual consciousness is a theoretically valuable and psychologically real dimension of mental life. However, self-consciousness is not established in this distinction, but rather in what

Dilthey characterizes as the subject's primary phenomenal awareness of the self from the external.

Dilthey (1989) describes the essential distinction of his approach from those following the Kantian line:

Without this immediate reflexive awareness, the self as object could never come to know itself as one with the self as subject, just as light can never illuminate darkness as such, and the dawning day can never allow the night to be seen. The appearance of the one entails the destruction of the other. Accordingly, the act of reflexive awareness must be wholly distinguished from the act in which things are perceived or conceived objectively. (p. 340)

Dilthey explains that reflexive awareness inclusive of self-feeling, phenomenally precedes the abstraction of the self as subject, from the self as object, which is an act of secondary reflexivity. The outcome of that abstracted distinction then becomes entangled in problems of circularity for the question of self-consciousness, as seen in the Kantian formulation.

It should be accentuated that "In this context we can explain what is normally understood by self-feeling. It is the reflexive awareness of our psychic state, as the latter is conditioned by the world" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 340). This tells us that self-feeling, and by extension reflexive awareness, is the primary awareness of the contents of consciousness. This process identifies the self with those contents, as the self. The abstract distinction of those contents, and the attendant awareness of the self in apprehending them, are secondary processes of the psyche.

For Dilthey, self-consciousness is equi-primordial with the phenomenal awareness of self through self-feeling, reflexive awareness, and being-for-oneself. It is for this reason that he views subject - object dynamics within consciousness as secondary operational abstractions, or a part of the emergent, developmental trajectory of self-consciousness. Subject - object dynamics are real

and present in the mind's operations, but not fundamental to the emergence of self-consciousness.

In subsequent chapters of this study, Dilthey will be shown to elaborate his thesis of the emergence of self-consciousness. This will be seen in his analysis of aspects of the mind in relation to one another, and externality, in chapter 5. The preceding discussion provides us with a basic framework from which the more technical aspects of that discussion can proceed.

Dilthey's Psychological Epistemology

The Given as the Starting Point of Psychology

The Given

As with any working scientific system concerned with the study of psychology, Dilthey requires a basic principle on which to found the extended components of it. *The given* is a concept employed by Dilthey to satisfy this criterion.

Specifically, the given refers to the complete emergent psychological contents contained in and available to consciousness.

The given, the ultimate fundamental datum, and the facts of consciousness belong to a singular theoretical grouping. That is, the hypothetical aggregate of all contents of consciousness available and present to conscious awareness. However, the ultimate fundamental datum and the facts of consciousness are more elemental epistemic concepts, representing a basic description of the structure of consciousness. The given, by contrast, is a disciplinary denominator. It is presented as a general framework through which psychology should proceed, and stands in contrast to other such broadly defined systems. In this sense, the ultimate fundamental datum and the facts of consciousness articulate the epistemic substance of the given, but do not exhaust its meaning. The given is a theoretical framework that represents departure for Dilthey's psychology as a substantive principle in its own right.

Dilthey (1989) characterizes the concept the given as a general principle that stands in contrast to other historical conceptualizations for the foundations of psychology:

This epistemological foundation of the metaphysical school can be shown to be untenable.

But a tendency that has been dominant in European thought for many centuries from Plato to the victory of the nominalists in the fourteenth century, can lose its power over men only

when its colossal error is understood historically (p. 281).

Added to this context of the problem, Dilthey (1989) defines the given:

...This independent source of knowledge must be a source of representations (concepts) or judgements; for to have knowledge means to be in possession of representations or judgements. In fact, the metaphysical school considered the mathematical, logical, and metaphysical concepts and judgements as elementary data and grounded the sciences on them. But where are these data located if not in inner experience? Are they not perceived within it? Don't they form a part of inner experience just as much as the sphere of visual sensations or the correlate system of affective states? To this one might answer: judgements and perceptions are not comparable. The latter are data from which judgements, and hence knowledge, are derived; the former *constitute* knowledge. But if this were the case, perceptions would never produce knowledge. The very word [*Wahrnehmung* = perception] indicates that perceptions are true and false just as concepts or judgements are. Or if someone denies that concepts can be true, we should say that they are as true as judgements. Both classes of psychic facts are given to us as knowledge, taking that word in the broadest sense. (pp. 281-282)

As seen here, the given represents the totality of psychological contents available to investigation as the raw data of psychology. Dilthey argues that the making of distinctions and creating of classifications within the foundation of a psychological epistemology bears out contradictions. Such a fragmentary epistemology also ignores the inner relations of psychological facts as they are presented in consciousness. While the facts of consciousness can be thought of as a primary conceptual tool in a description of consciousness, the given is specifically intended as an

epistemological principle from which psychology should proceed, and stands in contradistinction to other such proposals.

Dilthey describes the concept the given, as expressed in the subsection of *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (Dilthey, 1989) entitled, “The Given, Which Forms the Point of Departure of Psychology, and the Scope of the Problem Inherent In It” (p. 281), in experiential terms. As we’ve seen, the experiential dimension of Dilthey’s psychology is central to it. Dilthey conceives the given as a representation of the primacy of experience to psychology. “All reality is given in experience. Thought is an analysis of reality. These propositions cannot be disputed” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 281). This in turn, further demonstrates the dependency of knowledge on experience. Dilthey (1989) explains this dependence:

The rigorous proof... that experience is the ultimate arbiter of all knowledge is that concepts and presuppositions possess their evidence by virtue of the fact that they are derived from perceptions, or that they are accompanied by a feeling of conviction which precludes the possibility of denying them. We experience their truth, in the end, only the same way we experienced the truth of the external world, through an analogous feeling of conviction. If you wish to call this belief, then not only the real world but logical, moral, mathematical and other axioms are all based on this belief. (p. 282)

This quote articulates the thrust of what is meant by the given. Dilthey conceptualizes knowledge as grounded in experience because this embodies all sensation and perception. Situated in the assertion of the unity of consciousness, Dilthey posits conviction as the epistemic result of that unity. The given represents certainty of the external world and one’s psychological reality, through the evidence of the total contents of mental life.

The given establishes Dilthey's psychological epistemology within the domain of experience and the complete psychological contents it confers. This represents the primary moment of substantive psychological knowledge and reflexivity about its subject.

The Psychic Nexus: The Relation of Minds

The current section is devoted to Dilthey's conceptualization of the relation of the contents of the psyche. The concepts set out below illustrate the sense in which Dilthey's foundational theory about consciousness is part of a broader psychology and the human sciences.

The Psychic Nexus

A core theoretical component in Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness is his employment of the concept *Zusammenhang* (*the psychic nexus*). The psychic nexus is a concept best explained by way of heuristic, and will be accomplished by referring back to our discussion of Dilthey's distinction between explanatory and descriptive modes of scientific investigation. This heuristic approach will also aid us in understanding the relationship between Dilthey's psychology and the human sciences.

Explanatory sciences can be understood as modes of investigation which observe, compare, test, and quantitatively investigate phenomena. Another crucial dimension of explanatory science involves causality. "By explanatory science is to be understood every subordination of a domain of experience to a system of causality [*Kausalzusammenhang*] by means of a limited number of well determined elements (i.e. the components of a system)" (Dilthey, 1977, p. 26). The term *Kausalzusammenhang* (*causal nexus*) refers to a universal structure of causality, operating on all levels of reality representing fully integrated, immutable laws implied by the outcomes of scientific investigation. Dilthey conceptualizes psychology's subject matter as essentially

incongruent with an explanatory framework predicated on an underlying assumption of a causal nexus.

Dilthey prefers a principle for psychology idiosyncratic to mind and the human sciences. Explanatory psychology based on a natural scientific paradigm such as physics for example, would find it difficult to demonstrate intrinsic validity for the study of psychology. This is partly because it would be extremely difficult to isolate all variables related to mind and behavior in order to demonstrate causal relationships between these in a lawful way. According to Dilthey (1977), the requirement for causal connections between variables in explanatory systems gives rise to a general problem regarding hypothesis generation, which we observed earlier in our study:

We state first that every explanatory psychology depends on a combination of hypothesis which are indubitably designated as such by the already indicated fact that they cannot exclude other possibilities. To each group of hypotheses is opposed yet a dozen more. The general struggles which go on there are no less violent than those in the metaphysical field. (p. 26)

Here Dilthey underscores the phenomenal incongruence between psychological and physical subject matter, by accentuating excessive hypothesis generation as an outcome of the idiosyncratic nature of the former.

Dilthey's writing on this subject suggests a scientific framework for psychology that is grounded in experience as a starting point for analysis and description. Additionally, in the place of a causal nexus, Dilthey proposes a psychic nexus because it incorporates a theory of the interrelationship of the contents of consciousness with experience.

The psychic nexus refers primarily to the overall interconnectedness of mental life, because all expressions of different minds originate in the same structure. This is first an experiential reality and process, and only a matter of reflexivity in awareness. Dilthey (1977), explains:

We explain nature, we understand psychic life. For in inner experience [innere Erfahrung] the processes of one thing acting on another, and the connections of functions or individual members of psychic life into a whole are also given. The experienced [erlebte] whole [Zusammenhang] is primary here. The distinction among its members only comes afterwards. (pp. 27-28)

The psychic nexus is first a description of the interdependence of all contents of consciousness with themselves, in an individual consciousness. Its unitary structure is made evident in conscious experience. Also, the psychic nexus serves to explain why psychology could be conceptualized as a foundation for a broader human science.

The self-evident diversity in human psychology of course implies complexity as an outcome of what people do and think. Humans have economic lives, political lives, religious beliefs, and any other number of life dimensions emergent in the complexity of human action. Academic institutions for example, develop and scrutinize knowledge in a number of different fields; psychology, history, political science, economics, and other disciplines endeavor in their respective domains to add to the body of knowledge represented by it. The psychic nexus is intended as a unifying principle between such apparently disparate aspects of the mind's contents and expressions. The psychic nexus denotes the psychological continuum within, and inherent inter-connection between, all possible forms of psychological reflexivity and expression.

We should be careful to not interpret this assertion as suggesting an intrinsic identity of all expressions of mind. However, it is in reflexivity that different dimensions of psychological expression can be incorporated in an orderly psychic nexus. Dilthey (1977) extends this idea:

Jurisprudence includes in concepts such as norm, law, and responsibility, psychic complexes which require a psychological analysis. It is impossible for it to describe in what conditions the sense of rightness is formed, in which moral ends regarding the right are actually manifested, or how the will subjects itself to law, without having a clear understanding of the orderly nexus, the coherent whole of psychic life. (p. 31)

Dilthey points out that the study of law, in its common-sense relation to human actors in social contexts, requires a psychological analysis to adequately address its subject matter. This is sensible given the self-evident ethical, inter-subjective, and historical complexities involved in jurisprudence. The relationship between individual social actors and the ongoing augmentation of social norms and laws, are arguably the object of psychological inquiry.

Dilthey extends this reasoning to other domains of scholarship. “The political sciences dealing with the external organization of society encounter in every bond the psychic facts of community, domination and dependence. These demand a psychological analysis” (Dilthey, 1977, p. 31). Here, Dilthey provides the intuitively valuable insight that the study and analysis of the external organization of society is a task for psychology. A cursory consideration of the complex psychological relationships between individuals, groups, and political institutions demonstrates the value of this assertion.

Importantly, Dilthey (1977) counts the study of history as appropriate for psychological investigation:

History and the theory of literature and the fine arts find themselves at every point brought back to the complex, fundamental aesthetic moods concerning , the beautiful, the sublime, and humorous or the ridiculous. Without psychological analysis these remain, for the historian of literature, obscure and dead ideas. It is in no sense possible to understand the life of the poet if one ignores the imaginative process (p.31)

Dilthey views all human thought, expression, and systems as originating in the orderly nexus of the psyche. He maintains that psychological analysis is needed to satisfactorily investigate human action in conjunction with the spectrum of disciplines which otherwise endeavor to do so. Dilthey (1977) reinforces this assertion:

Just as the system of culture-economy, law, religion, art, and science – and the external organization of society in the ties of family, community, Church and state, arise from the living nexus of the human soul [Menschenseele], so can they be understood only in reference to it. Psychic facts constitute their most important component, thus they cannot be understood without psychological analysis. They possess an inner connectedness [Zusammenhang] because psychic life is itself a nexus. (p. 31)

The psychic nexus is a depiction of individual and group psychology as connected in a pre-reflexive inter-relationship, manifest in otherwise distinguishable domains of expression. This is our point of intersection between the broader scientific-disciplinary implications of the psychic nexus, to its significance for consciousness specifically. Dilthey argues that the inter-connected dynamic underlying the various sub-systems of the human sciences is analogous to, indeed

descriptively interchangeable with, the inter-relationship of mental contents within an individual consciousness.

The subtle but real distinction of this concept from the given, consists in the stipulation of the interconnectivity of the substantive contents of consciousness, suggested by the term nexus. Also, the psychic nexus addresses the role of phenomenality in consciousness, as it represents substantive structure and meaningful differentiation in mental life. The psychic nexus provides us with a theoretical depiction of the interconnectedness within consciousness, and the relationship between minds as an implication of universal mental structure.

The Psychic Nexus as a Foundational Concept for Dilthey's Psychological Epistemology

Dilthey asserts that a rigorous human science should interpret distinct disciplines for the study of humanity as various branches of a far more integrated, unified science. Dilthey alternately theorized psychology to be the optimal starting point for a human science, as all aspects of psychological expression are fundamentally integrated in a psychic nexus. Given these assertions, Dilthey's theory must adequately address the question of the relationship between epistemology and psychology specifically.

The idea that any science depends on the knowledge it produces to legitimate the production of it is epistemologically problematic. In other words, when a particular discipline's basic epistemology is derived from the findings of that discipline, a problem of circularity arises. Dilthey intends to dissolve the cleft between epistemology and psychology through his formulation of the psychic nexus. This formulation traverses the boundary between his basic ideas on the structure of consciousness and his psychological epistemology.

Dilthey's proposed solution to the problem of a workable epistemology for psychology is sensible through his conceptualization of the psychic nexus, but does not entirely escape the

problem of circularity as defined above. To demonstrate this, we should restate that Dilthey (1977) views all analyzable or observable aspects of human psychology as emergent from the psychic nexus. “*The psychic nexus forms the basis of cognitional processes*: one can therefore study the latter and determine its capacities only in the framework of this coherent nexus” (p. 35). In addition to this position, Dilthey (1977) asserts that, “the history of the human studies rests precisely on this lived nexus which it gradually raised to full consciousness” (p. 35).

Given this assertion, Dilthey turns to an epistemological question in psychology; what can we know about this lived nexus? Dilthey (1977) is direct on this question; “The basis of the theory of knowledge lies in the living consciousness and universally valid description of this psychic nexus” (p. 35). In other words, the psychic nexus represents the complete interconnected contents of the psyche, and describing this in a universally valid manner would answer the epistemological question in psychology. Dilthey implies that the universally valid form of analysis of the psychic nexus exists in the hermeneutic, descriptive method inherent in the psychological program he endorsed.

In this sense, the study of psychology becomes the study of epistemology. “The reason why psychology must supersede or absorb epistemology is that all reality is given to us as contents of the mind” (Rickman, 1988, p. 83). Dilthey views epistemology as commensurate with the study of psychology, as an implication of his elemental description of consciousness. Dilthey (1989) demonstrates this in describing the internal relation of all psychic contents and therefore the epistemic core of psychology:

The original nexus of objects, volitions, representations, and feeling is also the nexus of the facts of consciousness; its horizon encompasses them all, and they are governed by its conditions. Insofar as an inner nexus can be established among the data brought

together by the continuity of consciousness, and insofar as extrapolation from this nexus of consciousness is possible, perceptions and memories, objects and the concepts of objects will all fall within its scope. (p. 263)

In this sense, Dilthey's system only avoids theoretical circularity by identifying psychology with its subject matter, or subsuming its epistemology within it. Psychology, under this formulation, represents an axiomatic epistemological core and framework, from which investigation of its contents would proceed.

The psychic nexus has been presented as categorically distinct from a causal nexus, or necessary causal order. It was explained as a more appropriate framework for the human sciences and psychology specifically. Following this, it was shown that the psychic nexus presented by Dilthey demonstrates the interconnection between the contents of the psyche, and those of different minds. The critical importance of the psychic nexus for Dilthey's psychological epistemology was then emphasized.

Sensation, Perception, and Representation

Kant and Brentano as Critical Background for Dilthey's Psychology

Dilthey's formulation of the aspects of the psyche differs significantly from that found in theories which support a faculty theory of mind. To understand these differences, it is important to review some ideas contained in systems which support a faculty psychology.

As discussed above, Immanuel Kant figures importantly in both modern philosophy and psychology. A significant component of Kant's philosophy of mind and psychology involves a constellation of core concepts that represent a unique conceptualization of faculties.

Kant, in addition to other historical figures in German philosophy and psychology, argued that the psyche subsisted within faculties which were conceptualized as irreducible to one

another (see Kant, 1998). Put another way, Kant's faculties of mind were theorized as phenomenally bounded, or aggregates in-themselves, which could not be reduced further than themselves into one another. Kant's primary faculties of mind are cognition, feeling, and desire (see Kant, 1998).

Dilthey argues that Kant had derived his faculties of mind through an analysis of the content of representations. Under Dilthey's interpretation of his work, Kant theorized the instance of a particular psychic representation as exposing substantive distinctions in the content of that representation. These were seen as universally present for all representations. In this analytic framework, Kant distinguished cognition, feeling, and desire as elementary, irreducible components of representation.

Kant viewed these categories (faculties) as recognizable and distinguishable components of any given representation. Dilthey (1989) explains of this conceptualization that "This doctrine of the faculties of the mind rests on the distinction between what results from stimuli, which impinges on psychic life from outside, and what lies in psychic life itself as in a second complex of conditions" (p. 295). Dilthey theorizes that Kant conceptualized the contents of representations as he did, through the analysis of both (what we will be describing as) empirical consciousness or objects represented in consciousness which exist in the external world, and what he (Kant) formulated as self-consciousness.

Although the elaborated details concerning Kant's employment of the faculties cognition, feeling, and desire specifically, and faculty psychology in general, are important points in the history of modern psychology, these details extend beyond our current goal. It should however be mentioned that "The idea of explaining the soul in terms of various faculties was firmly established and found its legitimacy in Aristotle's (2001) five faculties (powers) of the soul in his

De Anima” (Teo, 2005, p. 42). Additionally, this tradition was exemplified “in Wolff’s German invigoration of faculty psychology” (Teo, 2005, p. 42). Mentioning Christian Wolff (1679-1754) is especially significant for the current discussion as “In a general sense, Kant was influenced by the so-called Leibniz-Wolff tradition of thought” (Teo, 2005, p. 43). Also important was the influence of Johann Nikolas Tetens (1736-1807), a contemporary of Kant’s, on his psychology. Teo (2005) found that:

Tetens, a follower of faculty psychology, aimed at reducing the soul into its basic faculties and became famous for his authoritative tripartite division of psychological faculties into the basic processes of feeling (Gefuehl), understanding (Verstand), and willing (Wille), which became the systematic basis for Kant’s critical philosophy.
(p. 43)

Although this is the case, Dilthey (1989) is careful to critically argue that Kant’s formulation did not represent an ontologically discreet set of mental faculties:

Kant’s classification taken in its proper, critically restricted sense does not posit the existence of three originally distinct fundamental faculties of mind, but only a differentiation given in consciousness of all psychic phenomena, which is based on the different references of representations in consciousness. Accordingly, he distinguished an objective reference of representations to objects and the unity of consciousness [necessary for] *knowledge* from an objective reference of representations in which they are at the same time regarded as causes of the reality of objects [through] the faculty of *desire*. Both of these he opposed to the exclusive reference of representations to the subject as the world of *feelings*. (pp. 283-284)

Franz Brentano (1838-1917), a German philosopher and psychologist, developed a theoretical system for a series of classifications of the psyche that followed a conceptual line similar to that

of Kant's. Dilthey's (1989) analysis of this accentuates Brentano's focus on *intentionality* as an analytic framework in developing his classifications:

In this [Brentano's] [parentheses added] approach "the different relations that mental activities have to their immanent objects" becomes the basis of classification. With a formulation that owes something to Thomas Aquinas, Brentano also designates this basis of classification as the "different kinds of intentional existence" of the object. In taking this as his point of departure, he seeks to order all psychic phenomena into classes on its basis... (p. 298)

Dilthey is theorizing that Brentano's intentionality regarding the contents of consciousness is the basis for his derivation of psychological faculties. Brentano (1874) characterizes what we are describing as intentionality this way:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing), or immanent objectivity. (p. 88)

Brentano theorized that each mental act had an object or mental content, which could represent any or all contents possible for the mind that was immanent to, or equi-primordial with it. Seen this way, a psychological act is characterized as that which intentionally presents as its object, or content. Brentano (1874) further argues that:

Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. In presentation something is presented, in judgment something is affirmed or denied, in love loved, in hate hated, in desire desired and so on... We can, therefore, define mental phenomena by saying that they are those

phenomena which contain an object intentionally within themselves.

(pp. 88-89)

Brentano's intentionality implies that each psychological act exists in accordance with the intentional presentation of an object, or psychological content.

Dilthey argues that Brentano interprets the immanent objects of consciousness we've described, as the phenomenal foundation of psychological faculties. In other words, the objects of mental acts give rise to psychological faculties. Dilthey critically argues that Brentano conceptualizes the basis of psychological faculties to be the objects represented in consciousness. This is in an analytic fashion similar to that seen in Dilthey's interpretation of Kant's derivation of faculties, grounded in the objects of consciousness.

Dilthey on the Aspects of Consciousness

The reason for the focus of the preceding section of this chapter is twofold. To introduce the historical concept of faculty psychology, and to draw attention to the employment of object consciousness in the conceptualizations of both Kant and Brentano respectively. This is because Dilthey is opposed to both approaches.

In the place of faculties and distinct categories, Dilthey proposes that the dynamics of consciousness represent aspects of the psyche. In addition to this, Dilthey views object consciousness in Kant's and Brentano's epistemology as misdirected. We will first explore Dilthey's reasoning on the latter point, then his own conceptualization of the aspects of consciousness; *thought, willing, and feeling*.

Dilthey views consciousness as an incontrovertible whole. In addition, we should recall Dilthey's conceptualization of internality and externality in psychic life. Taken together, these components of Dilthey's system form the basis of his critique of object consciousness. This was

shown as a central component of the psychological epistemologies which seek to establish faculties of mind.

An essential point in understanding the relationship between object consciousness, and both Kant's and Brentano's version of faculty psychology, rests in the epistemological conflation of what Dilthey would refer to as the internality and externality of mental life. Dilthey offers that the distinction between the mental representation of objects as a component of thought, and the external reality of those objects, is critical when considering psychological internality.

The key to understanding Dilthey's critique of faculty psychology is in his analysis of representation and thought, as analytically distinct from perception and sensory processes. We will refer to this distinction as one between the content and processes of the psyche. This distinction is grounded in Dilthey's analysis of representations and thought in particular.

It is important to remember that the distinction mentioned here is a descriptive device, rather than referring to an ontological assertion. Although this theoretical step may appear contradictory, Dilthey's method tends to move between basic phenomenological assertions (the unity of consciousness for example) and the descriptive theorizing he uses in formulating the aspects of consciousness. Although Dilthey views consciousness as a unified phenomenon, it is self-evident that it contains and expresses observable, substantive and widely varied dimensions.

Dilthey's analysis of representations involves three essential points. The first of these is the assertion that both representations and perceptions originate from the same unitary conscious source. In this context, recall our discussion on the facts of consciousness and the principle of phenomenality in particular. Regarding Dilthey's (1989) theory of representation and perception, he asserts that; "Perceptions and representations of things originate from the perceptual stream" (p. 395).

The second is that representation is positioned to thought in the manner in which perception is positioned to the sensory process. Dilthey argues that perception is closely linked with what we would refer to as cognitive processes, and what we are here referring to as sensory processes. Also, he conceptualizes thought as the dimension of consciousness through which the contents of representation, taken up from perception, are judged. Dilthey (1989) explains that:

Thought relates to representation as perception relates to the sensory process. In thought we represent the real or what is contained in the real world. The act of thinking is a judgment. A judgment is true insofar as that which is asserted in it is contained in reality and thus ultimately represents the latter. (p. 395)

In explaining this dynamic between the sensory process, perception, representation and thought as an act of the judgment of the contents of the former three, Dilthey (1989) also asserts that:

Representations serve thought by placing a content over against it as being true. Consequently, judgments express not a belonging-together or separation of representational content. The judgment is therefore that spontaneous act of representation and will in which what is asserted affirms or negates a being-together of the representational content of the assertion. (p. 395)

In other words, representation takes up perceptual information, more or less as a conscious aggregate, and thought determines the form those contents will take.

Dilthey's distinction of thought from representation lies in the judgment of the content of representations. Sensory processes allow information from the external world to be taken up into perceptions, which form representations. The content of these representations is then reflexively judged by thought.

The third component in this formulation is that representation and thought treat the objects each are confronted with spontaneously through sensory processes and perception. This is accomplished through a mode of consciousness which originates in the self, rather than the external world. This distinction may appear arbitrary on the surface, but it is important to remember Dilthey's conceptualization of internality and externality. The epistemic content of that discussion can now be applied to Dilthey's psychology.

Dilthey posits an epistemic distinction between sensory processes and perception on the one hand, and representation and thought on the other. This shows that perception is interpreted as the essential conscious correlate of external reality. Representation and thought are therefore positioned as the dimensions of consciousness which attend inner reality. Dilthey (1989) further explains this dynamic:

The will to know whereby perception raises the thing from the sensory process lies in thought. Representation, as opposed to perception, receives the rule of its application from the spontaneity of our self, not from external reality. *Accordingly, thought pursues the purpose of cognition with means both new and peculiar to it.* [emphasis added] Yet it is still subject to the restriction that every content of representation... must be contained in perception and the reality given in it. (p. 395)

Dilthey is drawing attention to his thesis that thought, as a mode of the judgment of the contents of representation, has its origin in the self, as opposed to perception. Also, thought contends with or judges only the contents given to representation through perception. This analysis avoids circularity only by taking account of the form of information taken in from the external world, eventually taken up by thought. The best way to understand what Dilthey intends by this distinction of form, is by considering the question of meaning, between perception and thought.

An analogy will aid in our understanding of the distinctiveness of thought (as a category) in Dilthey's formulation. Take for example the referential difference between the morning and evening star. Objectively, a stellar object seen from the earth's surface at various points in time, expresses in recollection perceptions of the same star which differ subtly. These perceptions are the result of sensory processes which receive, process, and internalize clusters of quantitatively and qualitatively differing information. These basic perceptions are simultaneously taken up in consciousness as representations; the recollection of a star seen in the early morning in, in a particular place in the sky, and the recollection of a star seen in the evening. The same star is recalled at different times of the day, in different places in the sky.

Thought, in its capacity for judgment of the contents of representation, makes the referential distinction between the representation of the star in the morning, and that of the star in the evening. The role of thought then, is to establish or express the substantive form of that presented to it, through perception, sensory processes, and representation. Thought, in other words, gives meaning to the otherwise indiscriminate contents of the former aspects of consciousness which correlate with the external world. Sensory processes and perception correlate with the information taken from the reality of the external world; a single star seen at different times of the day, in what appear to be different locations. Thought judges the content of these former given in representation. Through thought, the morning and evening star are derived as different.

Understanding Dilthey's assertions concerning distinctions among the various aspects of psychic processes or sensory processes, perception, representation and thought, we can now explicate the manner in which his analysis of the psyche differs from that of his contemporaries. Through this, we will also come to understand his general opposition to faculty psychology.

This will be accomplished by first recalling Dilthey's description and analysis of Kant's and Brentano's theoretical formulations concerning faculties of mind. We will recall Dilthey's fundamental concern regarding both Kant's and Brentano's conceptualization of faculties. This is grounded in what he (Dilthey) sees as the epistemological primacy of object consciousness, in the formulation of both former systems. Dilthey views the faculties of mind proposed by Kant and Brentano as expressions, or direct products of the psychological representation of external objects. Recall also that Dilthey's reason for this criticism rests in his distinction between internal and external reality.

For Dilthey, the positing of an internal reality further problematizes the position of his contemporaries. This is the case when the assertion of the incontrovertible totality of consciousness is considered. The assertion of a conscious totality locates the psychic correlate of external reality, and source of internal reality, within the self-same, unified, conscious domain. This dialectic is important because Dilthey's theoretical interplay between perception and thought locate the various aspects of the psyche within that unified dynamic. In other words, Dilthey's theory manages to address the question of the relationship between the correlates of the external and internal (or perception and thought), through the theoretical grounding of both of these in a unified consciousness. This distinguishes Dilthey's account from Kant's and Brentano's faculty psychology in that the external is conceptualized through the totality of consciousness. Therefore, the correlates of the internal, or representation and thought, contain the substance of the contents of sensory processes and perception, in a composition unique to an individual mind.

Dilthey locates the expressed reality of the aspects of the psyche in a unified consciousness. In doing so, he theoretically justifies the epistemological dialectic between the conscious

correlates of internal and external reality; perception and thought. It is in this sense that his conceptualization avoids what he criticizes in Kant's and Brentano's faculty psychology. Dilthey argued that both systems founded their respective theories of faculties of mind on the objects (or correlates) of external reality.

Alternatively, Dilthey proposes three central aspects of consciousness; thought, willing, and feeling. These are considered by Dilthey to be epistemologically distinct from faculties. As our current goal is to explicate the general relationship of Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness to the epistemology of his psychology, we will not be discussing the content of this formulation at great length. Another reason for this explanatory brevity is Dilthey's own relative frankness on this issue as a matter of self-evidence. In discussing the dynamic between the sub-aspects of consciousness mentioned above, Dilthey (1989) explains that:

A perception is in fact more similar in kind to a representation than to a sensuous feeling. Even though it is possible to compare perception, sensuous feeling, and desire with one another, and to find a common property whereby they can be subsumed under the general concept of an immediate sensuously determined psychic state, they nevertheless do not constitute any kind of homogeneous whole, anything comparable to the system constituted by each of the different aspects of psychic life: cognition, willing, and feeling. This fact cannot be grounded in any way, it can only be perceived. And it is sufficient for the purposes of the following investigation that we have the right to use the terms "representation", "thinking",... "feeling", and "willing" as expressions for these clearly distinguishable aspects of psychic life.

(pp. 299-300)

Dilthey posits thought, willing, and feeling as self-evident aspects of consciousness. These, he maintains are distinct from the faculties proposed by Kant and Brentano. This is accomplished on the theoretical premise of the relationship between internal and external psychological reality.

Awareness and Attentiveness: Dilthey and the Question of the Unconscious

Dilthey's Characterization of Theories of the Unconscious

The proposition of an unconscious psychological domain implies a discreet secondary mode of consciousness within itself. Such a mode is either equi-primordial with, or prior to what we can refer to as ego consciousness, that contains its own representations and psychic content. The idea of the unconscious is a historically long-standing idea.

Dilthey is opposed to the idea of the existence of an unconscious mind. At the time of his writing there existed a number of theories representing at least some discernable variation on the unconscious. Dilthey (1989) tended to identify all such systems under what he saw as central, problematic aspects of these:

A large number of modern thinkers have based their research on the assumption of *unconscious psychic contents*, even unconscious psychic processes. As proponents of this doctrine, I will mention Leibniz, Kant, Herbart, and Helmholtz in Germany, James Mill, Hamilton and Maudsley in England. By the very nature of things, this distinction *is not given to us in a direct experience*. We are directly aware of our conscious states, while the fact of unconscious representations or processes can only be inferred from investigations of these conscious states. In accordance with my method, we must first establish those distinctions that lie within our experience, and then use them to scrutinize the assumptions by which some have attempted to deduce [the existence of such] speculative entities as unconscious representations, thoughts, and inferences.

(p. 301)

We should articulate Dilthey's characterization of what theories of the unconscious summarily entail for him. Hypothetical unconscious psychic contents and processes that exist outside of that which we can consciously be aware. This position is an untenable one for Dilthey.

Dilthey proposes the presence of a basic theoretical error in systems which posit an unconscious psychic domain. He argues that the hypothetical existence of an unconscious with its own contents and processes cannot be assumed by the observation of its apparent effects in consciousness. Such an apparent observation is what he identifies as the primary theoretical justification for positing an unconscious, and we will demonstrate why it is viewed as mistaken.

For now, it is sufficient that we bear Dilthey's conceptualization of self-consciousness in mind. This theoretical component gives us the key to Dilthey's critique of theories of the unconscious. Dilthey contends that the experiencing of mental life rests at the phenomenal foundation of self-consciousness. Therefore, apparent secondary psychic contents ostensibly effecting that of which one is aware, cannot properly be considered contents at all. For this reason primarily, Dilthey views the hypothetical assertion of unconscious psychic processes and contents as theoretically untenable.

Dilthey's Analysis of the Question of the Unconscious

Dilthey's analysis of theories which support the existence of an unconscious domain proceeds from two concepts which figured significantly in early German psychology; perception and apperception. These concepts refer to levels of awareness of, or attention paid to, the contents of consciousness. Dilthey (1989) introduces these concepts:

With the compass of *direct experience*, we find a perfectly clear distinction which can be confirmed by anyone and which provided the point of departure for the scientific

treatment of psychology in the writings of Leibniz. This distinction is established by the fact of *attention* and the *interest that is connected with it*. In the old school of psychology that followed Leibniz, this was termed apperception and contrasted with perception. Tetens designates this process “attentive awareness”.

(p. 301)

This description of perception and apperception is elaborated with a theoretical addendum involving Dilthey’s (1989) critique of theories of the unconscious:

When the psyche tells itself, as it were, to look, and thereby expresses the act which comes to life in it; when it grasps an object as this particular object, picks it out among others, and distinguishes it, then we have what is called direct awareness, attentive awareness or “apperception”. In discriminating degrees and modes of awareness we find running through our conscious life a distinction between psychic life – processes that occupy us directly and attract our attention in various degrees of strength, demanding our intense or fleeting interest, and other less discernable psychic states that accompany them. (p. 301)

The points in this quote are central to Dilthey’s criticism of theories of the unconscious. They reinforce the critical point that all such theories hypothesize the existence of contents of consciousness which are within it, but not directly attended to by awareness.

Dilthey interchangeably refers to apperception as direct awareness or attentive awareness. By these terms, Dilthey intends the psychological act of focusing thought and representation towards a limited set of objects which include sensations, memories and so forth. Put another way, apperception refers to those particular contents of consciousness which are present to

consciousness as a measure of the attention given to them, because they are foremost in attentive awareness.

In this theoretical formulation, perception refers to the more elementary, unattended to dimension of mind. Perception represents the anterior mode of consciousness to apperception. For Dilthey, the psychic contents and effects of the perceptive dimension of mind, corresponds with what is otherwise interpreted as an empirical demonstration of the unconscious. Therefore, Dilthey opposes the interpretation of the perceptive mode of consciousness as a categorically unconscious psychological domain.

Those psychic phenomena described by Dilthey's contemporaries as unconscious expressions, are interpreted by him as products of the otherwise unified contents of the perceptive dimension of the psyche. Dilthey acknowledges that such contents of consciousness exist outside of conscious awareness, and indeed that those contents produce certain psychic effects. However, he theorizes that the source of such effects, or that which is contained by consciousness but lies outside of awareness, remains within the unitary conscious domain nonetheless.

The perceptive dimension of the psyche is not phenomenally separate from the apperceptive mode of mind for Dilthey. Perception and apperception function along a conscious continuum, rather than separating into discreet ontological and epistemological categories. Dilthey (1989) argues that:

Even without consulting observation or experiment, we can dispose of the view that distinguishes perception from apperception simply by taking the former to mean the kind of awareness that is characteristic of perceptions or representations, and conceiving the latter, *apperception*, as involving the participation of our *attentive*

interest oriented self. (p. 302)

To this description of the epistemological problem, Dilthey (1989) adds:

there is no distinction between perception and apperception: perception qua consciousness and self-consciousness are related in terms of consciousness. Either it is possible to distinguish only degrees of involuntary interest and the corresponding emergence of the conscious representation prior to voluntary application of attention, or a distinction must be found within this spectrum. (p. 303)

Awareness is not viewed as a phenomenally isolated mode of consciousness, singularly directed towards a given content, or limited set of contents. Dilthey argues that conscious awareness or interest is a broad and psychologically complex act.

Dilthey (1989) conceptualizes awareness, attention, or interest as a mode of consciousness which, in varying degrees of strength and expressed conscious articulation, attends to the contents of a unified consciousness:

While a man is overcome by violent anger, that part of his visual field which bears no relation to his anger is still present to his consciousness, though just barely... Even while working out a difficult intellectual problem, we [can] still hear a scarcely noticeable noise. (p. 302)

The examples used by Dilthey in the above quote represent his critical explanation for what are otherwise conceptualized as unconscious psychological phenomena. Dilthey proposes that conscious awareness extends beyond the boundaries of (what theories of an unconscious psychic domain interpret as) a threshold of the conscious mind, inside which a categorical perceptive domain would be posited. In the place of this model, Dilthey offers a contiguous depiction of

conscious awareness, from those contents most apparent to awareness, to the very least or barely perceptible.

When Dilthey points out the simultaneous awareness of stimuli of varying degrees of perceptibility, he is underscoring the perceptive breadth of the psyche. Awareness, attention, or interest, are theorized to extend to every stimulus present to consciousness along a continuum. This dissolves an ostensible boundary between the perceptive and apperceptive domains.

An implication underlying this assertion is that the most remote or substantively small psychological contents are perceived, on some level of strength or articulation, in conscious awareness. The conscious experiencing of substantively small stimuli, may for all intents and purposes not be taken up in recollection as a psychological event. However, Dilthey's thesis depends on the idea that all psychological events are experienced as a function of attentive awareness, or conscious interest, the breadth of which permeates the psyche in its entirety. Dilthey (1989) elaborates this point:

The memorability of perceptions is a function of the interest they hold for us when we disregard other circumstances that might have a secondary influence on memorability. Thus, we cannot exclude the possibility that conscious but unnoticed perceptions or representations, even a very large number of them, may at every moment surround the area of my attention peripherally, with decreasing, eventually minimal, distinctness, which then with few exceptions fall forever into oblivion. We are not in a position to say that in a given moment we did not have such a multitude of conscious representations because we *remember* having thought of nothing [other than what we attended to]. We can only say that we *do not remember* having thought of anything else. (p. 308)

Conscious awareness is conceptualized by Dilthey as encompassing all possible psychological events. A segment of total psychological experience might not be recalled as mental events, particularly those contents of experience which are substantively small. The mistaken assumption as Dilthey interprets it, is that such contents had not been experienced, and therefore the positing of them as outside of a unified consciousness could arise.

Considering these points, we can now more fully comprehend Dilthey's critique of theories of the unconscious. From an epistemological point of view, mental contents are all originally encompassed by awareness, and are therefore contained in a unified consciousness. Seen this way, the interpretation of a psychic domain separate from ego consciousness, would be to misinterpret the essential nature of mental contents as universally apprehended.

Dilthey's thesis may not appear to adequately address the question of observed psychological effects, otherwise interpreted as products of an unconscious psychic domain. This is especially true if we think of scientific developments within psychology since the time of Dilthey's writing. For example, the assumption of the presence of unconscious processes, and the subsequent compartmentalization of mind is tacit in much of modern cognitive science. An excerpt from Marvin Minsky's (1997) essay *A Framework For Representing Knowledge* demonstrates this fact in a critical way:

It seems to me that the ingredients of most theories both in artificial intelligence and in psychology have been on the whole too minute, local, and unstructured to account—either practically or phenomenologically—for the effectiveness of common-sense thought. The “chunks” of reasoning, language, memory, and perception ought to be larger and more structured; their factual and procedural contents must be more intimately connected in order to explain the apparent power and speed of mental activities... Similar feelings seem to be

emerging in several centers working on theories of intelligence. They take one form in the proposal...to divide knowledge into substructures, “microworlds”. Another form is in the “problem spaces”... and yet another is in the new, large structures that theorists... assign to linguistic objects. I see all these as moving away from the traditional attempts both by behavioristic psychologists and by logic-oriented students of Artificial Intelligence in trying to represent knowledge as collections of separate, simple fragments. (Haugeland, 1974-1997, p. 111)

This quote provides some examples of concepts in modern psychology which involve variations on the assumption of unconscious psychological processes.

Chronological incongruity notwithstanding, Dilthey’s treatment of this issue is somewhat parenthetical. He suggests that the psychological contents responsible for observed effects, leading to the positing of an unconscious, to be an unexaminable question in-itself. Dilthey views the contents of consciousness which are furthest from conscious awareness as essentially unknowable. This is because recollection and awareness cannot articulate such contents to the level of rational thought. Dilthey (1989) comments on this issue:

Since conscious but unnoticed psychic acts have the characteristics that are required by the facts and for the sake of which the [theory of] unconscious representations were introduced; since these acts have effects on our representational life and thought, and provide the impulses for movement; since the least noticeable among them possess a minimal capacity to be recalled; since we can conceive of their approximating the vanishing point of reality; and since such perceptions or representations can be neither observed nor remembered and therefore are operative without being encountered in some way in consciousness, it follows that a proof of unconscious psychic acts is

impossible for the future as well; if they exist, they transcend human knowledge.

(p. 311)

Dilthey proposes that conscious but unnoticed psychic acts cannot be conceived of as unconscious. This is because, as such contents are unnoticed, and do not exist in awareness or recollection, their phenomenal existence cannot be proven. Dilthey refers to these contents as conscious because all possible mental contents are theorized as apprehended in a broad and fluid awareness. From this point of view, ostensibly unconscious psychic contents are brought into the analytic framework of the facts of consciousness.

If all psychic acts are not included in a unified consciousness, then those psychic acts should be shown to demonstrate the substance of that from which they are purportedly distinct; expression in thought and representation. Dilthey rejects the proof of this criterion on the basis of the observed effects of an unconscious on the conscious. He views the absence of representations of unconscious psychic contents as evidence of the untenable nature of this hypothesis. Indeed, as Dilthey (1989) asserts towards the end of the above quote, he views the scientific possibility of acquiring insight into the question of the substance and form of unconscious psychic contents as one that does “transcend human knowledge” (p. 311). Dilthey asserts this because the possibility of substantial unconscious psychic acts cannot be scientifically considered, as they cannot be directly observed.

The question of the existence and nature of an unconscious psychological domain is a long standing and not uncontroversial one. Dilthey’s central question in addressing all such hypotheses is whether the very idea of unconscious psychic acts is an epistemologically tenable one.

Dilthey argues that consciousness comprises a continuum, that traverses an ostensible boundary between the historically important categories of perceptive and apperceptive mental domains. Consciousness therefore, attends to all contents available to it, albeit without full recollection of total mental events experienced. Also, if unconscious mental representations do exist, Dilthey accentuates that they cannot be observed, and are therefore inaccessible for empirical examination.

Logic, Thought, Psychological Processes and Contents: The Unity of Consciousness

Logic and Thought

Having discussed Dilthey's psychological epistemology in some detail, it is important that we explicate his ideas concerning the laws and operations of thoughts themselves. This portion of Dilthey's broader conceptualization of consciousness is of particular interest to psychologists as it discusses his specific ideas concerning the nature of logic, as it relates to consciousness. It will be shown that Dilthey's conceptualization contains a detailed and well integrated theory of mental processes and logical operations. This is accomplished while maintaining the integrity of the principle of the unity of consciousness.

Logical Operations

In addressing the role of logic for his conceptualization of consciousness, Dilthey sought to explain what logic itself is. This may appear parenthetical to our central topic, but Dilthey's analysis of the emergence of logical operations is very much an integral aspect of his broader theory of consciousness.

Dilthey theorized that the order of thought corresponded with the nature of human psychology. "Logic has as its object the whole, that is, the actual thought nexus of human life and history" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 400). He argued that the logical order of human thought and the rules governing it were correlates of reality. As Dilthey (1989) explains:

The simplest components and relations of reality have the highest degree of generality, and reappear most pervasively in nature. This is not a consequence of our system; rather, the way functions of thought are connected in logical forms and laws is conditioned by the nature of reality. (p. 426)

Dilthey posits the equi-primordial correspondence of the laws of thought and reality. However, “The problem of logic is how to develop the norms of thought” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 400). Additionally this “[constitute(s)] the ultimate factual dimension of the intelligibility of nature” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 426). In other words, because the laws of thought correspond with reality, we are therefore given proof that nature is intelligible through it.

As an example of this position, consider the question of whether mathematical reasoning should be thought of as corresponding with the varied phenomena it is used to analyze and describe. To be sure, mathematics is not directly interchangeable with logic as a descriptive tool, but rather a highly complex set of laws and propositions extrapolated from far simpler laws. If we hypothesize that all thought is in some way grounded in elementary logical operations corresponding with it, through Dilthey’s conceptualization, mathematical reasoning (as a complex extension of this correspondence) corresponds with the phenomena it proposes to analyze and describe. “Phenomenal reality produces the particular configuration of the logical system. Without any reference back to the nature of this reality, the fact that we think in terms of judgments, i.e., attribute predicates to subjects, would be unintelligible” (Dilthey, 1989, pp. 401-402). The psychological operations which give rise to reasoning are correlates of external reality, and are the basis of that which it expresses and describes.

Dilthey proposed a relation between reflection and its data from the external world, which permeated all levels of consciousness, and could not be reduced elementally. The relation of a thought to its object (datum) was not thought to represent an epistemological distinction between perception and apperception. Dilthey (1989) considered the relation of thought to the external world and its psychological datum always as one of thought to datum:

An irreducible relation between a function of thought and a datum upon which it

operates pervades all levels of thought. (it was Kant's mistake to regard [apperception] as a primary function and perception as a datum) Analysis of perception as a datum by Helmholtz, etc. (p. 426)

When Dilthey (1989) reasons that the relation of thought to a datum is "irreducible" (p. 426) he is locating the phenomena for consideration not in the psychological faculties for perception, representation or thought, nor in a psychological datum, but precisely in the intersection of these. This is a relation that Dilthey maintains cannot be analytically dissected or reduced, and remains phenomenally unchanged on all levels of consciousness.³

These points lay the theoretical groundwork for what Dilthey conceptualizes as the foundation of logic. "The purposive system of knowledge is realized in the representation of relations among the components of reality, and in the relations of the universal and the particular" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 427). As the components of reality correspond to the laws of thought, the representation of these through symbols is conceptualized as a purposive system of knowledge. This produces a system of knowledge which represents the external world with an epistemology that corresponds with it.

Dilthey also stipulates that the abstraction from particular to universal representations is implicit in this system. The elementary operations of thought produce extrapolation. This is precisely what allows a system of knowledge to incorporate and make sense of novelties in the world. To provide a basic example of this, consider the statement; the apple is a fruit and appears round. Here, apple is a particular object which is described as a fruit and round. Now consider the statement; the orange is a fruit and appears round. The descriptors fruit and round have been

³ Here, it is helpful to recall Dilthey's critique of the notion of the unconscious; he theorized that all consciousness exists along a 'conscious continuum', from perceptions and thoughts which are barely perceptible, to those foremost and immediately present to consciousness.

abstracted from the apple and applied to the orange. The particular instances of these descriptors have been otherwise applied, and could be extrapolated further.

The basic process of abstraction from particulars to universal representations rests at the foundation of the categorization and extrapolation of thoughts and symbols. For this reason, particulars in relation to universal representations are an integral aspect of the purposive system of thought for Dilthey.

The representations we are considering are the result of underlying psychological processes, from which they should be distinguished. This is because the processes of thought which produce a series of relations of representations are not themselves those representations; phenomenally, they are processes. “The cognitive process and the representation of its outcome are to be distinguished. Formal logic analyzes only the latter. For it, the object of analysis is a system of propositions with logically binding relations” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 427). This is important because Dilthey conceptualizes cognitive processes as external to consciousness. This is because they cannot be perceived in experience, only analyzed and described through abstraction. Representations are presented to consciousness or experienced symbolically. Dilthey suggests that expressed propositions are logically bound to one another to form a system of thought or knowledge. Also, cognitive processes are symbolically neutral processes in relation to those propositions brought to conscious representation.

The question of how representations involved in logical systems can justifiably be said to stand in meaningful relation to one another can now be raised. As was discussed above, Dilthey theorizes that thought is grounded in logical forms because these correspond with the structure of reality in general. This begs a further question; how does one justify the relations of logic itself? “We define an *inference* as an elementary form of justification, which cannot be analyzed further

without the justification disappearing” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 427). Here, Dilthey presents inference as a self-evident and irreducible foundation of logic, and therefore thought. The basis of the relationship between representations is to be taken as self-evidentially valid, but not necessarily true. This is because of their simple representation to thought as belonging together or apart.

Consider as an example of inference, these statements; All fruit will biodegrade. An orange is a fruit. An orange will biodegrade. Here, a true inference has been made between fruit, biodegradability, and oranges. The particular orange, belongs to the category fruit, and the universal category biodegradability. This is one example of what we refer to as *sylogistic reasoning*, which finds its formal origin in the work of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). In his *Prior Analytics*, Aristotle (350B.C./1984) writes that:

If *A* is predicated of every *B*, and *B* of every *C*, *A* must be predicated of every *C*... Similarly also, if *A* is predicated of no *B*, and *B* of every *C*, it is necessary that *A* will belong to no *C*. (pg. 41)

This categorical formulation is an example of the foundations of syllogistic reasoning and sentential logic that Aristotle had set out, that should alternatively be understood as a deduction. Shields (2007) clarifies this:

1 All **As** are **Bs**. 2 All **Bs** are **Cs**. 3 Hence, all **As** are **Cs**. Anything taking this form will be a deduction in Aristotle’s sense. Let the **As**, **Bs**, and **Cs** be anything you like (humans, mammals, animals; computers, machines, artifacts; violists, orchestral players, musicians), and if indeed the **As** are **Bs**, and the **Bs** **Cs**, then perforce the **As** will be **Cs**. (p. 119)

Consider also the statements; Everyone with dark hair is tall. David has dark hair. David is tall. This, as is intuitive is not necessarily true, although it employs valid inferential reasoning and is

an inference in the Aristotelian usage. However, what is essential for our discussion is not the many and varied possible problems of content and truth in the employment of inference, but its form. We are concerned with the fundamental psychological operation of inference as a generalizing and sense making tool.

Dilthey's critical point is that the inference from a particular representation (oranges), to a broader category (fruit), and a universal property of this (biodegradability), is an elemental component of logic and by extension thought. It posits the substantial qualities or contents of representations with, or apart from, one another. In other words, inference is the psychological tool through which sensible generalizations are made, and its validity is self-evident as a necessary reflection of thought.

Dilthey argues that the unity of consciousness is a necessary precondition for the positing of an inference. Although an inference is a basic operation of thought, it is only possible through experience. Dilthey (1989) qualifies this assertion when he states:

Once it has been recognized that the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness cannot be derived from the laws of association, then the dependence of the laws of association on the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness must be taken as the point of departure. Accordingly, the whole is primary... Thus to the principle of identity in self-consciousness, there corresponds a principle of the systematic unity of all acts of experience and experiences in a world. (p. 403)

To this qualification of the unity of consciousness and self-consciousness as prior to the plurality of psychological datum, Dilthey (1989), adds:

That an inference is properly formed can, as a result of the integral unity of our system, be established only from experience. This principle is the correlate of the principle that

in the final instance, there can be no guarantee for thought other than experience itself.

(p. 404)

This is a point that completes Dilthey's analytic circle concerning inference. Inference is a necessary condition for thought that cannot be called into question on the basis of the various consequences it bears out (true statements or false statements). But also, inferences are only possible given experience. One requires an experiential context inside which to make and assess inferential suppositions. Dilthey (1989) elaborates this point:

There is no final proof that an inference is correct other than the evidence or the feeling that accompanies the act of inferring. For if one appeals to the criterion of truth as non-contradiction in thought, this too is an inference established only by virtue of the criterion of evidence, and its non-contradictoriness is also experienced in the same way. That I have inferred correctly—of course, here too, the act of inference is considered as distinct from the particular content of the inference—first manifests itself as a cessation or breakdown of the feeling of conviction.

Consequently, the method of formal logic is in the final analysis just as dependent on the use of experience as the analogous method of ethics... These are the facts of experience from which it must derive its principles. (Dilthey, 1989, p. 404)

Dilthey reasons that inferences are only possible given conscious experience with which to assess them, but also that the content of these are independent of the act of inferring. One can only infer given a conscious awareness of the world in experience. This awareness is the basis for the judgment of whether the contents of an inference are correct or false. Experience and the unity of consciousness are necessary preconditions for logical inferences according to Dilthey, through which the contents of these can be assessed and tested.

The theoretical positing of experience prior to logic is an important distinguishing feature of Dilthey's system when considering his era. Much of idealist philosophy had cast logic as an a priori symbolic template for transcendental forms of thought, or put another way, a symbolic guideline for what mind essentially was. Dilthey's conceptualization depicted logic as a product of experience and the mind, a tool to be utilized in scientific investigation in particular ways. It was not a primary object for investigation into the essence of the mind itself, or the symbolic termination of all its activity. Ermarth (1978) further explains this:

In contrast to Kant, and in keeping with Trendelenburg's evolutionary *Idealrealismus*, Dilthey regarded logic not as the final inventory of the a priori forms of thought, but as a set of integrated and refined reflections upon the body of accumulated human experience... In his program the rules of logical reasoning are conceived as the distilled results of human experience in the broadest sense. (p. 161)

The distinction set out here, between Dilthey's formulation of the phenomenal emergence and epistemological status of logic, and that of some of his contemporary's underscores much of what has already been accentuated in this work. For Dilthey, experience is primary to thought and its operations which include logic.

In discussing Dilthey's basic conceptualization of logic in relation to thought, we have detailed his theory of the correspondence of the laws of thought to reality. Additionally, we have explained his idea that an irreducible relation between a thought and its object or datum permeates all levels of consciousness, or is not phenomenally different across those levels. We then discussed logical operations as expressing a purposive system of knowledge, and the roles particular and universal representations play in this. Also, Dilthey's important distinction between representations and psychological processes was explained, with an emphasis on the

substantive differences between these. We discussed Dilthey's treatment of the concept inference, detailing his contention that it is a self-evidently necessary psychological tool. Finally, Dilthey's treatment of the role of the principle of the unity of consciousness, and experience in relation to logic were considered. Dilthey's treatment of logic in its relation to thought is an indispensable aspect of his conceptualization of consciousness as a unified whole.

The Phenomenal Analysis of Psychological Processes, Psychological Contents, and Physiological Perspectives

The current section will involve reintroducing some concepts we had addressed in earlier chapters. In particular, the concepts perception, sensation, and representation will figure significantly in what is to follow. This portion of our study however, will describe Dilthey's phenomenological analysis of these. The discussion aims to clearly demonstrate that Dilthey's conceptualization of the structure and dynamics of consciousness is commensurate with his principle of the unity of consciousness.

Dilthey's analysis of consciousness incorporates the idea of psychic contents as a plurality of simple representations. How are these simple representations related to a phenomenally unified consciousness? In addressing questions surrounding the roles of perception and sensation in the production of simple representations within a unified consciousness, Dilthey supports his thesis of the incontrovertibility of that unity.

A central problem that must be dealt with involves addressing explanatory hypotheses which presuppose physiological reductionism in explaining the production of conscious representation. Dilthey opposes the position that conscious representations can be elementally reduced to quantifiable units of physiological operations in perception and sensation. Instead, Dilthey maintains that the physiological processes which proceed from simple perception and sensation

to conscious representation cannot be exhaustively discovered. Also, he views such physiological operations as external to consciousness. In addressing these issues, we will describe Dilthey's analysis of sensation and perception, moving to his phenomenological description of these.

Dilthey's Critical Treatment of Physiological Analysis in Sensation and Perception, Including a Phenomenological Analysis of These

To begin this discussion, we must explain why Dilthey rejects the proposition that observation and measurement of the physiological operation of the senses and the brain can provide an exhaustive account for causal foundations of conscious representations. Dilthey (1989) introduces the problem:

In the case of perception, we would have to assume an extraordinarily rapid succession of changing life-moments. But this would mean that what affects us must be thought of as coming in individual impulses that communicate each separate stimulus to the nerve endings of the visual or tactile senses. We have no conception of the process that takes place in this causation, and every metaphysical account of the causal relation (such as, most recently, that of Lotze) can at best replace it with another relation that is equally inconceivable for us, and speculative as well. (p. 324)

Here, Dilthey refutes the suggestion that a satisfactory account of the exact causal and procedural dynamics leading from perception to representation is possible, or remain speculative at best.

Dilthey (1989) also argues that:

All hypotheses about this are irrelevant. It does not matter whether the stimulation produces a sensation in a nerve cell at the end of the process, either because the preceding nerve elements transmit the stimulation to this cell as an effect that is

manifested as a representation, or because the stimulation of this cell results in a sensation as a consequence of what is conceived to be the preceding element... These are mere hypotheses, which start from presuppositions that cannot be proved.

(pp. 324-325)

Dilthey critically rejects the possibility of an exhaustive, causal-explanatory account of the emergence of representations in consciousness from quantifiable perceptive elements. Such hypotheses are theorized as grounded in presuppositions which cannot be proven.

Adding to this criticism, the problem regarding the relationship between external stimuli and the contents of perception and sensation is addressed. This is theorized as an analysis that involves only the functional aspects of this dynamic. This position is exemplified in Dilthey's (1989) question regarding the relationship between stimuli and thought: "The main question in representing this relation is *whether something which exists only as a physiological stimulus can be there for attention and thought*" (p. 324). Dilthey is establishing the boundary of the question regarding the relationship between stimuli and thought, to the existence of stimuli, and its effect as a perception or sensation. The functional aspect of stimuli, and its effect is in attention and thought, there for consciousness. "This question is resolved through the analysis of the concept of being-there-for-something" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 324). By the phrase at the end of this quote, Dilthey intends that physiological stimuli are there to be taken up by attention and thought, and therefore correlate with the contents of sensation and perception. "If we conceive of the physiological stimuli existing for attention and the like, then they are precisely what we call sensations, and they must be located in the psyche" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 324).

Dilthey draws a procedural line from physiological stimuli directly to sensation, which he designates a fact of consciousness. Dilthey does not discount the procedural operations of

physiological stimuli in producing perceptions and sensations. He interprets the outcome of these (the functional aspect of these) as existing for attention and thought alone, the epistemic result of which are facts of consciousness. Dilthey (1989) further notes that:

The stimulation that is transmitted by an element of the retina is there for attention only by its being noticed. This means that the stimulus [*a*] and besides it *b*, *c*, and *d* are sensations when they have been transmitted to the nerve terminations.

(p. 324)

The analysis of the relation of units of sensation and perception to simple representations and conscious awareness of these, presupposes that a minimum of perceptual content cannot be established as a discrete local mechanism for representation. Under a hypothetical analysis, an investigation of perception might seek to determine the lowest threshold at which perception could detect intensities of a particular quality (sound, colour, etc.). But, as Dilthey (1989) argues:

if we seek to define what is analytically simple in the field of perception, i.e., what is identical or constant, this must be thought of as a *minimum* [satisfying the following conditions:] consciousness would have to be indifferent concerning changes in its location relative to adjacent points and concerning possible continuous qualitative transitions to contiguous points. (p. 326)

In the above quote, Dilthey is accentuating the complex relationship between qualities, the real (space - time) environment in which they are situated, and the position in which an individual consciousness that perceives and represents these qualities stands, in relation to them.

Consciousness would, in the event that a perceptual minimum were tenable and relevant for conscious awareness, have to isolate individual qualitative perceptions from the dynamic and integrated real-world environment in which they are situated, and one another. This argument is

rooted in the principle of the unity of consciousness. It is further understandable when remembering Dilthey's concept of phenomenality; phenomenality entails that consciousness is situated in temporality.

As we have seen, Dilthey argues that the contents of consciousness are there for attention or to be noticed. A unified consciousness cannot be conceptualized outside of its temporal situation, whose unified contents are there-for-itself. Therefore, it cannot be conceptualized as phenomenally representing discrete qualities within the sensory-perceptive system.

Qualities, as represented in consciousness through perception, bound to the spatial and temporal world and one another, cannot be properly isolated, and are therefore not properly the subject of individual measurement. "Since a minimum, even if only scarcely noticeably, is distinguished from surrounding minima, we end up with a system of points, e.g., for visual perception, which does not correspond to the nature of perception" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 326). Dilthey argues that perceptual minimums are inconsistent with the phenomenal nature of perception.

At this point in our discussion of Dilthey's treatment of the physiological analysis of sensation and perception, we should consider his analysis of the quantitative analysis of these. Dilthey casts doubt on the idea that the physiological components of sensation and perception can be neatly correlated to sensation and perception themselves. "The structure and function of the sense organs, especially the units of [measuring] their movements, need not stand in the most simple conceivable relation to perception" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 327). This implies that the act and conscious products of perception cannot be said to reduce to simple physiological operations. Also, a distinction is drawn between the measuring of the motor dynamics of these physiological

variables, and the act of perception itself. Dilthey opposes the position that the act of perception can be reduced to the physiological correlates of it.

Dilthey (1989) justifies the above position by arguing that “if we could find the element of the physiological terminal state reflected in the sensation” (p. 327), this element could be considered “the initial state of psychic life” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 327). Dilthey is suggesting that if the point at which sensations and perceptions terminate in the physiological processes through which they variously enter consciousness could be determined as a threshold (beyond which those contents are represented in the unity of conscious awareness), such a point could be considered an initial state for consciousness. Dilthey (1989) argues that such a point is hypothetical at best, when he asserts that “If such equivalences prove to be necessary for psychophysics, then it can introduce them as abstractions” (p. 327). Dilthey reasons that psychophysics requires a hypothetical foundation around which to create laws related to the quantitative measurement of sensation and perception. This implies that conclusions from psychophysics are, by extension, unempirical abstractions. Dilthey critically characterizes the epistemology of quantitative sensation and perception analysis as representing a necessary abstraction.

Additionally, Dilthey (1989) places criteria on the establishing of a measured minimum for perception. “*Any imaginable minimum for perceptions and representations will be spatially oriented, will be quantitatively determinate, and will have a qualitative intensity.* (I) Because it has these three aspects, this minimum is not simple;” (p. 327). This stipulates the hypothetical requirements involved in establishing a minimum for perception and sensation. The three dimensions of this hypothetical constellation are, spatial location, quantitative determinacy, and measure of qualitative intensity. This formulation implies that a minimum for perception and sensation would be profoundly complex in its description, if not untenable.

In addition to this criticism of discrete units in sensation and perception, Dilthey (1989) points out that in hypothetically isolating units of sensation, other sensations which occur simultaneously in consciousness are ignored:

by disregarding other aspects of sensation to focus our attention on one of them —that is, by an act of abstraction—we can arrive at a simple representation as the ultimate element of pure analysis. Such an element arises when we treat the other aspects as variable. (p. 328)

Here, attention is drawn to the fact that a unit of sensation is particular to a given kind of sensation. This abstraction from a contiguous, unified consciousness, turn sensations of other qualitative substance, into variables. Sensations express themselves as unified in consciousness, and the dissection of these for elemental analysis violates this psychological contiguity.

That the particular quality of sensations are not considered when measuring their intensity is also taken into account in Dilthey's consideration of the quantitative analysis of these. "In this context it is least of all possible to disregard the particular quality in determining the intensity of that quality. Thus, there is something strange in treating degrees of intensity as simple representations" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 328). We should remember at this point that simple representations were conceptualized as psychic contents that could be relatively isolated in the psychic continuum, as units of consciousness.

A psychic content may, under some circumstances be subject to quantitative measurement in its dependency on physiological stimuli, but it also contains qualities particular to it such as colour, shape, temperature, and so forth. Determining the measure of intensity at which particular sensations produce certain conscious expressions is a partial account of the nature of them. For this reason, Dilthey asserts that treating sensations as quantitatively defined by degrees

of intensity is inappropriate, as the qualities of these are not considered in this same investigative instance.

Sensation, Perception, and Phenomenal Consciousness in General

Dilthey recognizes that all sensations and perceptions, once sensed and perceived, will eventuate in consciousness to some degree. Also, some sensations may not have been originally detected by consciousness, but eventually be expressed in awareness. Dilthey (1989) explains further that:

what is distinguishable in sensation must have been distinguished in the final state. To be sure, what is not distinguishable in sensation could have been distinguished in the final state: the distinction that was posited in the stimulus might simply not have entered the perceiving consciousness. (p. 327)

This quote supports the idea that all contents which are distinguished in consciousness originate in sensation and perception. Although conscious awareness may not detect the stimulus for sensation and perception, the contents of these eventually enter conscious awareness.

It is through the recognition that some of the contents of sensation and perception may not be available to consciousness at their origin, that the boundary for a minimum of sensation is placed at the physiological minimum, or basic physiological unit of stimulus. This is an important ontological point; whatever is there in consciousness from sensation and perception originates at the boundary of the physiological stimulus. This happens whether such contents have been detected by consciousness or not. *“Thus the physiological minimum or element is the outermost limit of the minimum of sensation. The latter can encompass several physiological units”* (Dilthey, 1989, pp. 327-328). Physiological units or the location of the origin of stimulus for sensation, constitute the theoretical boundary of a minimum for sensation.

None of what we have discussed thus far should be interpreted as implying that Dilthey views consciousness, its sensations and perceptions, or the qualities of these, as extensively infinite in its activity. “We can organize these simple representations in terms of systems. The system of qualities, as a set of spheres of sensation, allows of only a finite amount of differentiation” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 328). The qualities which are part of different sensations, or sensations more generally, are finite according to the aggregate capacity of the sense-perceptive apparatus. Sensation and perception, and the conscious results of these, are seen by Dilthey as finite regarding the qualities peculiar to each.

Dilthey does however assert that the system of qualities is intensively infinite. The changes in qualities of sensations must be understood as non-discrete or infinitely contiguous, and may manifest in infinitely different ways. Intensity is conceptualized as infinitely (phenomenally) contiguous, and infinite in its various activity regarding the totality of psychic contents. “If differentiation could be regarded as internal, the system of qualities would not be extensively infinite, only intensively infinite. The same holds for the system of intensities. By contrast, the system of points in space is extensively infinite” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 328).

A system of qualities cannot be extensively infinite because only a finite number of qualities related to sensations and their conscious representation exist. A system of qualities related to psychic contents and the intensity of these are viewed by Dilthey as intensively infinite, but not extensively so.

Importantly, Dilthey makes note of the fact that sensory-perceptive units as abstracted from the conscious continuum are only distinct from constructive awareness or apperception in a relative fashion. Because sensory-perceptive units are isolated from the psychic nexus through abstraction, their delimitation must be understood as a secondary act of consciousness. Dilthey

argues that sensory perceptual units or contents play different roles at different points in psychic life, in the construction of conscious awareness. In this way, the perceptual image may be conceptualized as mere material for attentive awareness. Dilthey (1989) further explains this:

The distinction between sensory-perceptual and constructive awareness is only relative, but it is a fact that *the perceptual image can become mere material for the attentive awareness involved in thinking and knowing*. This can happen in different ways.

Sometimes we begin with a whole sensation-perception, which is raised to direct awareness only after a certain time, while sometimes there exists a tendency in the act of sensing-perceiving that leads our attention to construct [the external world].

(p. 328)

Here, Dilthey maintains the contiguous integrity of the psychic act and its contents. He accentuates the relative distinction between sensory-perceptual contents and attentive awareness or apperception. Dilthey also underscores the dynamic relationship between these former contents and apperception. This point in Dilthey's analysis of sensation and perception in its relation to consciousness, draws attention to the impetus for focus on sensing and perceiving in analysis. This is both because of the power of abstraction, and what is apparent to the active mind when apprehending the world. Dilthey's analysis accentuates the reflexive awareness of sensory-perceptual contents in the organizing activity of consciousness.

Sensation, Perception, and the Unity of Consciousness

Dilthey acknowledges the necessity and basis of physiological operations in the transmission of sensations and perceptions to conscious awareness, but maintains that these are primarily there for attention. "In all events we must think of the sensation as a single effect, the result of a process by which it is there as a fact of consciousness" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 325). Physiological

stimuli serve as a bridge between the internal and external, but result in simple representations. This renders an investigative focus on the phenomenal dynamics of physiological stimuli immaterial.

This conceptualization of sensation can be better understood through recalling our discussion on self-consciousness. There, we reviewed the idea that self-consciousness is contrasted with the external world. Dilthey conceptualizes sensations as facts of consciousness which represent the external world. In this respect, sensations play a significant role in the emergence of self-consciousness.

It is important to recall that Dilthey opposes the idea that sensations are internal psychic facts. “This involves the failure to recognize the fact that an effect on the will is implicit in sensation. *Since there is no one-dimensional, merely representational fact, what is sensed is in consciousness as something foreign, as external world*” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 325). Here, sensations are characterized as facts of consciousness, which, through the substantive multidimensionality of their contents, are in consciousness but sensed as external. Again, sensations are shown as essential in the emergence of self-consciousness. Sensations are mental contents which are part of the activity that establishes a boundary between the self and their contents (the external). “From the beginning self and external world are distinguished within it” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 325).

Consistent with his line of argumentation concerning the seamless unity of simple representations in consciousness, Dilthey reinforces the point that sensations are not taken up as intermittent, discrete units in conscious awareness. Regarding sensation and self-consciousness, Dilthey offers that “The external world is given in it as a whole, as the not-I within which every single sensory effect must take its place. I call this “being oriented” ” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 325). Sensations in consciousness form a single, unified, representation of the external world.

Situated in contrast to the external world represented by sensations in consciousness, Dilthey (1989) describes the subject as being oriented:

Being oriented has its centre in the I—and the way the nerves spread out in all directions in the body is the prototype of a horizon. The way a sensory effect is oriented for us as something outer within a whole is what we call “space.”
(p. 325)

The unified conscious form that is the result of sensations, posits the self in relation to the external world, and is oriented within it. The self is shown as oriented in space, through sensations that provide a unified representation of the external world, and the proximity of its contents.

It has been explained that Dilthey conceptualizes the simple representations conveyed to consciousness through sensation and perception as expressed in unified conscious awareness, or apperception. Dilthey also defines the plurality of simple representations in consciousness as substantively different according to the sensation of differentiation. “If we consider the representational aspect, we see that its manifold is not at all differentiated according to psychic acts or separate states, but rather in accordance with the sensation of differentiation” (Dilthey, 1989, pp. 325-326). Dilthey accounts for the substantive difference between various contents in conscious representation by the positing of a sensation of differentiation.

The contents of consciousness are not to be conceptualized as distinguished according to separate psychological states, but by a sensation that is procedurally prior to representation. Dilthey (1989) explains that:

What is differentiated can still be held together in a continuous act. But there must be a change in consciousness when differentiation passes from content to consciousness.

There is no fixed measure for this change, because the primary characteristic of consciousness is continuity. (p. 326)

Continuity in consciousness is the basis for unity among the plurality of conscious representations. These are only distinguished through the sensation of differentiation.

One way Dilthey describes the activity of consciousness then, is as “an expanding mode of articulation” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 326). This means that Dilthey conceptualizes consciousness as a continuous, dynamic system of the incorporation, sense making, and refinement of psychic contents.

The complexity of the dynamics relating contents of consciousness to one another, and incorporating these in a structured and sensible fashion in conscious awareness, is powerful evidence of the continuity of consciousness. Dilthey (1989) reinforces this idea:

Even the transition from one quality to another cannot always be demarcated. Once point *a* is distinguished from the adjacent and qualitatively identical point *b* by its position in the visual field, then a change already takes place in *b* as compared with *a* due to the forward progress of consciousness. (p. 326)

Dilthey points out the simultaneous and mutual transition of multiple representations in relation to one another, and the totality of conscious awareness, as evidence that continuity underlies this process.

Returning briefly to our discussion concerning perceptual minimums, we will recall that Dilthey places emphasis on the concept of contiguity in consciousness when analyzing these. This point can now be put in the context of reflexivity and consciousness. As Dilthey (1989) notes:

contiguity constitutes the limit of quantitative differentiation. Whenever we

perceive things as contiguous, we distinguish quantitatively; whenever we distinguish quantitatively, we make things contiguous. Finally, differences of intensity have this very continuity of gradual transition as part of their nature. (p. 327)

The first part of the above quote refers to the proposition that quantitative differentiation is epistemologically secondary to contiguity regarding the intensity of sensations. This means that the smallest units of quantitative differentiation that can be determined for the intensity of a given sensation, lie phenomenally just outside the imperceptible threshold of non-differentiated contiguity in sensing. Dilthey offers that this contiguity raises the very tendency towards differentiating in analysis. This differentiation leads back to the recognition of contiguity in sensing, through a discovery of its limits. For this reason, Dilthey asserts that contiguity is implicit in analytic differentiation. Contiguity then, is shown as phenomenally essential to sensation and perception.

Dilthey's (1989) analysis of sensation and perception is theoretically consistent with, and substantially supports, his thesis of the unity of consciousness:

This critique [of the analytical minimum] shows that the facts agree with the assumption that has already been substantiated in other ways, namely, that *we start with the whole. An impression that enters [consciousness] does not have to exist as a delimited sensation within the articulation of this whole.* (p. 327)

The assertion that contiguity underlies the processes of sensation and perception reinforces the thesis of the unity of consciousness. This is accomplished through opposing the idea that sensory and perceptual information enter consciousness in discrete units. Dilthey stipulates that his conceptualization of consciousness starts with the whole, and its activity expresses this unity in the contiguous articulation of its contents.

Although Dilthey (1989) locates the origin of sensation at the boundary of physiological units, he defines any minimums in sensation as abstractions, and these abstractions represent what is meant by sensation for him:

These minima are infinite in number and are not subject to exact delimitation. They can be isolated from the perceptual continuum only by an abstraction. This abstraction is valuable and precisely determinable only if it is based on its physiological equivalent. The abstraction that arises in this way and that serves merely as the equivalent of the unit of stimulation is a minimum of sensation that we may not always be able to represent. This is the true meaning of the expression “sensation”.

(p. 328)

This expresses the view that a unit of sensation is only what is delimited from the perceptual continuum, which is seamlessly contiguous through abstraction, and associated with a unit of stimulation. Dilthey conceptualizes the flow of sensations and perceptions from their origin to consciousness as contiguous, and the hypothetical abstraction of a unit of these is a quantified unit of stimulation. This critically posits units of sensation as abstractions which have been isolated from procedural psychic contiguity in the transition from sensing and perceiving to awareness in consciousness.

Psychological Contents, Psychological Processes, and the Unity of Consciousness

The Objective Nexus

We’ve discussed Dilthey’s basic theoretical point that mental life subsists within an ontologically unified consciousness. Also, the term psychic nexus refers to the interconnectedness of the empirical contents of consciousness.

Dilthey alternatively refers to the psychic nexus as the “objective nexus” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 317) to refer to and underscore the totality of psychic life. From this *objective nexus*, he posits the theoretical construct of a *secondary nexus*. This secondary nexus corresponds roughly to attention, or focus in conscious activity in apperception. This secondary tier of consciousness is described by Dilthey (1989) as a nexus, because it represents the relations between the objects of an attentive and focused mind, to that of the objective nexus:

I take a cross-section of consciousness to locate this second nexus, which of course remains only a part of the first nexus. This second nexus exists when I distinguish between two colours or estimate the distance between two points in space or step out of the way of someone approaching me etc... In every given moment of life we are conscious of this kind of relation of contents rather than of a single simple content. These relations disappear into a nexus at the fringe of consciousness... The representation of sameness dissolves into the nexus of objects and figures, on the one hand, and into relations of consciousness on the other. (pp. 317-318)

The secondary nexus of psychic life refers to those contents in the immediate field of consciousness, conceptualized by Dilthey as a series of interrelated representations. When no longer focused on, these are subsumed into the objective nexus of psychic life.

The appearance, disappearance or general transition of the apprehended contents of consciousness from the secondary nexus to the objective nexus is continuous and cannot contain any intermittent stage whatever. This is supported by the self-evident observation that the secondary nexus attends to a plurality of contents between which it is posited. Dilthey (1989) comments on this dynamic:

Thus, the course of life as given in the flow of time can only manifest one relative

[representation] as it disappears and another relative [representation] as it begins to appear. It is this that constitutes the continuity of the psychic life-process. If only one representation were before our consciousness at any given time, psychic life would be intermittent. There would be an interval between the decline of one representation and the rise of another. (p. 318)

Dilthey is demonstrating the phenomenal necessity involved in the seamless flow of consciousness, and conscious awareness. Dilthey uses temporality and the idea that conscious awareness necessarily contains a plurality of representations to demonstrate that there is nothing phenomenally discrete about consciousness. Dilthey (1989) adds; “An intermittent consciousness would have to be perceived as such” (p. 318). Grounded in temporality, Dilthey views consciousness as a seamless, unified whole.

The Psychic Act and Psychic Contents

Conceptualizing consciousness as phenomenally seamless, or subsisting within an overarching unity, Dilthey provides further evidence between this position, and the self-evident existence of the plural contents of consciousness.

Dilthey posits a basic distinction between psychic processes and the contents of consciousness. The former Dilthey refers to as the *psychic act*. The latter are termed *simple representations*. Dilthey (1989) further explains:

that there is a *psychic process as distinct* from the content, from the object that I perceive, we know abstractly by means of continuous reflection on the facts of consciousness. We can at any moment become reflexively aware of this process-aspect no matter how deeply we are immersed [in] the content, i.e., the object and no matter how completely we have forgotten ourselves. (p. 319)

Dilthey argues that the contents of consciousness are reflexively distinguished from the processes which bring these into, and represent them in, consciousness.

The phrase psychic act refers to a unit within psychic processes. A simple representation refers to a unit of psychic contents. As Dilthey (1989) explains:

By a “*simple representation*” I understand a content which when abstracted from what it was connected with in acts of perception, can be brought into focus by attention and thus relatively isolated. It constitutes a limit with respect to the isolation of contents.

(p. 319)

Dilthey provides us with an explanation of what the boundaries of differentiation in consciousness are. The extent to which attention can abstract a relatively isolated content from the nexus of contents, constitutes the boundary of the distinction between them.

Consider for a moment three square panels on a white wall. One panel is blue, another red, and the last one gold. Standing in front of these panels, one perceives and represents all three simultaneously. If someone were to request that focus be put on the red panel while remaining in sight of the other two, one would attend to the red panel to the extent that focus and directed attention would allow. This, while remaining aware of the other two on the periphery of conscious attention. Dilthey puts emphasis on the dynamic of this relative isolation of the contents of perception and representation. The boundary of this relative isolation is the limit of conscious attention.

In accordance with the relative isolation of simple representations, a demonstration of the differentiation of these from the psychic act is possible. “A simple representation cannot at the same time be designated as a psychic act. Such a simple representation can never be isolated in the psychic act that bears the express intent of generating this kind of representation” (Dilthey,

1989, p. 319). Dilthey asserts that the psychic act cannot be interpreted as a simple representation as it is a process that allows for the production of these (simple representations), and therefore contains a plurality of them in its operation. “In the psychic act whose intention it is to separate itself from the nexus, the content is the very process of abstraction. Accordingly, that which is abstracted from is also contained in the content” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 319). The psychic act represents the process through which perception and sensation produce the contents of representations. Each instant of the psychic act’s operation contains the whole of perception and sensation, from which abstractions are derived. Psychic processes lead to simple representations, but contain the totality from which these simple units are abstracted.

To add to this picture of the psychic act, Dilthey emphasizes that it is not to be defined by the substance of the contents of simple representations, although it entails the totality from which these are derived. “It is just as wrong to define a psychic act by the content of a simple representation” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 319). This point is meant to underscore Dilthey’s conceptualization of the psychic act as a process, the contents and nature of which are phenomenally distinct from that which it produces. “Thus at no point does the psychic act as an element in the nexus of the life-process coincide with the simple representation as an element in the system of psychic contents” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 319). Dilthey conceptualizes the psychic act as a process through which representations are abstracted, but as phenomenally distinct from these latter.

The Epistemology of The Psychic Act

Our discussion in this section has thus far concerned itself with the distinction of the psychic act from psychic contents. We move now to a more detailed discussion of the psychic act itself,

closely considering the manner in which this contributes to the principle of the unity of consciousness.

Our discussion will first aim to understand what Dilthey theorizes as a unit of the psychic act as an aspect of consciousness and mental life in general. This involves exploring what Dilthey refers to as the *narrowness of consciousness*.

Conscious awareness is only capable of representing a small proportion of the actual perceptual information that it receives from the world. As a portion of the actual perceptual information presented to consciousness is represented in awareness or apperception, the remainder of what was taken up merges with the psychic nexus. As consciousness perceives and represents new information as is constant, that which was represented in conscious awareness also fades into the psychic nexus. For Dilthey (1989) this provides evidence that consciousness comprises a seamless continuum:

The other is that attention is able to encompass only a certain range of perceptual contents, especially representational contents. Since this inner nexus constantly leaves elements behind, which sink into obscurity, and moves forward to illuminate others, the resulting continuum of the psychic life-process shows no divisions, no demarcations. (p. 320)

Narrowness of consciousness is a concept employed by Dilthey to describe the activity of the apperceptive mind. It also places mental contents along the continuum of the psychic nexus.

Dilthey puts special emphasis on the notion of the continuity between psychic facts, which is important in attempting to explicate the idea of a psychic act as a unit. The term unit, in reference to the psychic act, may seem to imply discreet separation between plural units. However, Dilthey (1989) outlines the causal relationship between sequential states and perceptions:

Neither a perceptual constituent nor a feeling nor an impulse can arise in consciousness without some link to an earlier perceptual constituent or feeling, or at least without reference to the objective nexus (the system of the individual, so to speak) in which it is situated. This has immediate and far-reaching consequences for the contents of perception and for feelings. Each feeling is developed with reference to some preceding feeling; it is basically an evaluation of a change of state. (p. 320)

The idea that all states and perceptions follow from preceding ones is an essential component in contextualizing the psychic act within our broader discussion.

We should now define how the psychic act is conceptualized as a unit. Dilthey asserts that two instances predominate in identifying the conditions for a unit of psychic processes. The first of these involves types of expression such as language, which results in thought or judgment. The second Dilthey refers to as an act that initiates movement, which is the result of an act of the will. The essential phenomenal moment in both of these instances is the action of consciousness within a given, content laden context for either thought or behavior, that aims to express a content.

A unit of the psychic act is the particular action taken by consciousness, which is unique to what it produces in expression, as in language for example. "The relative isolation of a constituent of the psychic process, such as is found in the concept of a vital act, must be produced by a fixation that summarizes the outcome of a given moment" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 320). When consciousness is acting to organize concepts within a natural language according to the rules of that language, to express a particular idea, it is engaged in an instance of the psychic act. A psychic act is the aggregate activity of consciousness in the development of what gains expression through conscious awareness in linguistic or behavioral outcomes.

In order to understand the relative isolation of the psychic act, we will recall our discussion on the narrowness of consciousness. It is this theoretical construct that Dilthey (1989) uses to define a unit of the psychic act, as identifiably distinct from other psychic acts, but necessarily not discreet:

These acts thus derive the measure of the relation that is established in them from the narrowness of consciousness, that is, from the extent to which contents can be connected in a moment of consciousness. What is presented in a sentence or expressed in a decision of the will “first” arises or exists in an inner relational state. Both the sentence and the decision are homogeneous products resulting from an act that produces a unity. (pp. 320-321)

The narrowness of consciousness allows that only a relatively small plurality of the contents of consciousness can be connected for use in expression at any given moment. “the psychic act is determined in its scope by the fact that because of the narrowness of consciousness only a restricted number of contents reach the unity [of] apperception at any given moment” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 321). Thus, consciousness acts on a limited number of its contents at a particular point in time to produce a certain expressed outcome. The instance of that relatively isolated activity is a unit of the psychic act. The act remains embedded in the objective nexus from which the parts of it had come.

The distinction Dilthey makes between the psychic act and psychic contents is one he also considers elemental in the emergence of self-consciousness. Psychic contents are treated as psychologically primordial, substantive objects of consciousness. Insofar as psychic contents are taken up in apperception by the subject, and the activity of consciousness in producing representations and behaviors, they are also seen as elemental in the emergence of subjectivity.

“The distinction inheres in the psychic fact itself, and the counter positing of subject and object in cognition and in action is derived from it” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 321). Dilthey’s analysis of the distinction between psychic processes and contents provide an epistemological (not ontological) foundation for the subject - object differentiation in consciousness.

It is Dilthey’s contention that all psychic acts have *interest* as a phenomenal starting point in consciousness. “The psychic act belongs, as the expression implies, to mental activity, and this is always set in motion by interest” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 321). For any instance in which consciousness initiates thought or action through volition or freedom, or reacts to information and stimuli external to the self, the phenomenal foundation of this activity is interest.

Dilthey accompanies his theory of the foundational phenomenal moment of the psychic act (interest), with a theory of *freedom and necessity* in consciousness. Dilthey (1989) elaborates this assessment of the psychic act:

we draw every relation of force or cause or will from what is given here as a phenomenon, of which we become reflexively aware as a particular aspect of mental life, whether we experience ourselves as determining something or as determined by something. Consciousness of our freedom is based on the first experience; the consciousness of necessity, which in turn provides the foundation for logic, is based on the second experience. The active aspect of this phenomenon provides the basis for what we call the “psychic act.” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 321)

The two aspects of the phenomenal foundation of the psychic act, we will term *positive interest* and *reactive interest*. These represent the basis for the subject’s psychologically primordial experience of freedom and necessity. When moved primarily by positive interest, psychic activity experiences interest as an instance originating in the self, which results in

thought or behavior. Dilthey interprets this activity as a basic feeling of agency. The primordial feeling of freedom is here defined as the activity of consciousness around its subjective interests. Being determined by something, or consciously reacting to something imposed on consciousness from without the subject, establishes the primordial feeling of necessity. In this, the subject consciously experiences the limit and absence of freedom.

Another important aspect of the epistemology of the psychic act, is the proposition that it is foundational to distinguishing between the continuous and the discrete. This assertion is made intelligible through the recognition of the phenomenal distinction between the psychic act and psychic contents.

We will recall that a unit of psychic contents is referred to as a simple representation. Simple representations are identified in the process of conscious abstraction from other contents of consciousness. But, as Dilthey (1989) informs, “We distinguish the psychic act from the unity of the content” (p. 322). That is to say that the plural contents of consciousness are also distinct from the psychic act, as it is phenomenally, a process.

Because the psychic act is procedural, it underlies the continuous ebb and flow of the various contents of consciousness. In this particular sense, the psychic act represents a primordial sense of the seamless passage of time, or continuity. Psychic contents on the other hand, provide a sense of the discrete, as individual representations are brought into focus through abstraction in apperception. Dilthey (1989) describes the procedural dialectic between these propositions:

For in the psychic act a plurality is brought to unity, and this is completed in an instant.

Yet it is prepared for in time, since the emergence of this plurality in perception or representation requires time. Because with the advance of life some contents disappear and others appear, the psychic act attains a continuity with the course of one's life.

(p. 322)

The phenomenal distinction between the psychic act and psychic contents is the psychologically primordial basis for the awareness of continuity, and the discreet.

Another element in Dilthey's conceptualization of the psychic act involves the role of the will. Dilthey (1989) recognizes that in the course of life, the subject inevitably experiences "changes of feeling, of willing, and of knowing" (p. 322). Additionally, Dilthey (1989) argues that:

The 'I' that experiences these changes, remains itself throughout its developments:

These changes do not correspond to one another in such a manner that a change in one aspect brings with it a change in another. There are thus no units which, by containing all three aspects, compose the totality of the temporal-life continuum.

(p. 322)

Here the observation that feeling, willing, and knowing are experientially different phenomena is accentuated. Change in any one of these categories does not necessitate an equal and measured change in another. Because of this, Dilthey offers that the temporal-life continuum itself is more fundamental than any particular constellation of these categories. Dilthey is assuming that if feeling, willing, and knowing could be viewed as mutually determining one another, an instance that exemplified all three might be interpreted as a moment representing the totality of conscious life. Through this, Dilthey wants to make it clear that feeling, willing, and knowing are modes of the psychic act, but do not exhaust the latter.

Willing is conceptualized by Dilthey as a form of the psychic act or psychic processes that can be distinguished from any other psychic act "by means of a reflexive awareness of a change, as in straining or exerting—both involve merely a reflexive awareness of the volitional aspect of

the psyche” (Dilthey, 1989, p. 322). Here, the will is theorized as the psychic process involved in any decisive action initiated by consciousness, whether this be representational or behavioral. One becomes aware of the activity of the will through a reflexive awareness of volition generally.

Additionally, Dilthey theorizes the will as essential to the organizing activity of consciousness. Dilthey (1989) argues that “Such acts permeate our entire perceptual life. They emerge from so-called associations of ideas, and they form the overall nexus of thought” (p. 322).

The first part of the above quote makes reference to the associations of ideas, and Dilthey posits that acts of the will emerge from what are otherwise described as these. Being suggested in his postulation is that acts of the will are initiated by the subjective or particular organization of the mind. The manner in which individual psychologies are molded in experience, will determine the particular activities of the will.

The second portion of the above quote suggests that the will forms the particular organization the nexus of thought will assume. Here, Dilthey is providing an organizing principle for the mind, in the psychic activity of the will. The will, as expressed in the psychic activity of volition, directs thought and behavior according to what has been experienced by consciousness. The will both reacts to experience, and structures the contents of it according to the subjective form of volition that consciousness assumes. In this continuous forward movement of volition, the nexus of thought assumes its particular structure.

Dilthey draws a subtle distinction between the act of will and volition generally, which is not to suggest that he interprets these as mutually independent categories. By act of will we can interpret an intentional, purposeful, psychological act to a given end. Volition, by modest

contrast, encompasses both internally initiated acts of the will, as well as pressures and influences which originate outside the self, but eventuate as internal psychological phenomena nonetheless. As Dilthey (1989) explains:

The will is not, as we saw, a secondary lived experience that arises under particular conditions and disappears again. Although the act of will itself is transient, the volitional aspect of our psychic life, in virtue of which we both exert a causal influence ourselves and experience causes that are external to us *as* causes, is constant. Our sense of the real world depends on this constant volitional aspect. (p. 323)

Also, Dilthey (1989), drawing on this subtle phenomenal distinction, asserts that the act of will is less present to active experiencing in consciousness than volition, however:

It is difficult to find the point at which the act of will goes over into a state and becomes a lived experience. It has already been established that the volitional aspect is present even in lived experience, in the mere state. (pp. 322-323)

In this sense, the will should be conceived of as phenomenally constant in experience, but not always a state that the subject has reflexive awareness of.

Volition is viewed by Dilthey as the conscious awareness of intention in behavior and thought. To be reflexively aware of the relative isolation of psychic acts is an awareness of volition in consciousness, which is an expression of the will. Dilthey (1989) elaborates:

An act of will is always distinguishable from any other psychic act by means of a reflexive awareness of a change, as in straining or exerting—both involve merely a reflexive awareness of the volitional aspect of the psyche. With regular observation we find that even in the most evanescent processes such as glancing or looking around, there is a very faint reflexive awareness that separates acts from one another.

(p. 322)

Conscious awareness of the separation of psychological processes from one another, is awareness of volition. When one is aware of one's intent in any thought, one is paying attention to the volitional aspect of consciousness.

Volition correlates with awareness in conscious experience, but is not to be equated with the contents of this. Dilthey theorizes that volition is constantly present in any psychological processes or conscious experience, but is to be conceived of as phenomenally distinct from the feelings that result from those states. "lived experience is a volitional state. Moreover, the feeling contained in it stands in a regular relation to the state and is thus always present in it, but is not for that reason to be equated with it" (Dilthey, 1989, p. 323). Volition is here theorized as present in all conscious experience, but phenomenally distinct from its contents. Dilthey interprets volition as an active aspect of consciousness that is a property of it, rather than one or any of its contents.

It should be accentuated that psychic acts, as defined in association with willing or the volitional aspect of consciousness, are continuous or unified facts of consciousness. Unified facts of consciousness, which are recognized in reflexive awareness as relatively isolated, form a series of unified psychic acts. Further, these acts are to be analyzed within the context of a unified consciousness:

These units composing the continuity of [various] lived experiences of willing that are delimitable at many points, but held together as an act through the unity of consciousness, are models of unified facts of consciousness in general, in which what would otherwise be manifold is an indissoluble unity. (Dilthey, 1989, p. 323)

The psychic acts willing and volition are unified facts of consciousness, which subsist within a unified consciousness.

The Analytic and Genetic Analysis of Psychological Contents: The Epistemology of Psychological Contents

Discussion on this topic begins with an explication of the relation of analytic contents to genetic contents in conscious representation. In order to understand the precise meaning of this distinction, we must first clarify the meaning of analytic contents for conscious representation.

By analytic contents of consciousness, we mean the plurality of contents which are present to consciousness (at any given moment). To describe such a moment as a unit, is to understand what Dilthey conceptualizes as a *volitional unit*. A volitional unit comprises a moment in consciousness, wherein any given number of simple representations available to apperception, are present in awareness. As Dilthey (1989) explains:

For a vital act is a unit only for the will, not for the other aspects of psychic life. Such a volitional unit can encompass many simple representations and what is accumulated in them. We can call the filled part of time that does not change a life-moment. It is comparable to a point. (p. 324)

The totality of simple representations present to apperception in a *vital act* or volitional unit, comprise a relatively fixed point that Dilthey also refers to as a *life-moment*. The psychic contents of this life moment are the analytic contents of consciousness. The analytic contents of consciousness are the aggregate of simple representations available to apperception.

Genetic contents of consciousness have a different epistemic status than those spontaneously present to conscious awareness. These are psychic contents which are added to analytic contents through attention. Dilthey (1989) elaborates this idea:

Then we can assert that while it is the case that according to the principle of the unity of consciousness a plurality can be possessed simultaneously, only something simple can be added to it consciously. *What is analytically simple will here coincide with what is genetically simple, i.e., what is explicitly added to a state of consciousness through attention.* (p. 324)

Genetic psychic contents are simple representations which are singled out by consciousness through attention, and added to the psychic act involved in a life moment. Simple genetic representations are incorporated with those already present to consciousness, and thus become an aspect of the facts of consciousness in general. Dilthey's emphasis in this formulation of analytic and genetic psychic contents is on the phenomenal activity of volitional consciousness, as the ontological foundation of psychic contents.

Recalling our discussion regarding Dilthey's conceptualization of internality and externality, a distinction was drawn between psychic (cognitive) processes and inner experience. Considering the current context, we would alternatively refer to cognitive activity as psychic processes or the psychic act.

The volitional activity of consciousness is to be phenomenally distinguished from cognitive processes, as inner is to external, according to Dilthey's analysis of these. We can now more fully appreciate Dilthey's assertion that physiological and cognitive processes are external to consciousness.

The Psychic Act and The Unity of Consciousness

As we have seen, the principle of the unity of consciousness is a central point in Dilthey's overall conceptualization of mental life. Bearing our discussion in previous sections of this

chapter concerning psychic contents in mind, we can now illustrate Dilthey's primary justifications for this assertion.

Dilthey's most robust argument concerning the overarching unity of consciousness is an implication of the psychic act as we've described it above. The psychic act as essentially procedural in phenomenal terms establishes the basis for continuity in consciousness. The seamlessness of conscious continuity, exemplified in the psychic act, underlies the appearance and disappearance of various contents of consciousness. This is a point Dilthey (1989) draws special attention to:

The continuity of the course of one's life corresponds to the unity of consciousness by means of which a nexus of the facts of consciousness continues to exist as parts of it recede into obscurity and others are taken up into its sphere of illumination.

(p. 322)

Dilthey maintains that continuity permeates the rise and wane of various psychic contents, and that this is a demonstration of the unity of consciousness. Continuity in consciousness, as exemplified in the psychic act, is established as ontologically primary to the facts of consciousness. This tells us that although consciousness represents a plurality of contents in conscious awareness, these are expressed by an active mind that phenomenally inheres no distinctions. Dilthey is asserting that the phenomenality of consciousness is its activity or being itself; the contents of consciousness are expressions of this unity. Therefore, consciousness itself is a unity, and the appearance of difference and drawing of distinctions within it are exercises of abstraction.

The Continued Relevance of Dilthey's Conceptualization of Consciousness for Contemporary Psychology

Introduction

Having concluded our technical discussion on Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness, it is important that we briefly discuss the relevance of it for contemporary psychologists and psychology. We are concerned with describing ideas and practices found in various systems in contemporary psychology, which exemplify and utilize basic principles and themes from Dilthey's theory. Teo (2005) tells us that:

Dilthey had a significant influence on 20th century psychology, on the *geisteswissenschaftliche Psychologie* of Eduard Spranger (1882-1963), on Karl Jasper's (1883-1969) ideas on psychopathology, on Edmund Husserl's (1859-1938) phenomenological psychology, and on Hans-Georg Gadamer's (1900-2002) hermeneutics. In North America his ideas influenced Gordon Allport (1897-1967) (see Nicholson, 2003) and his spirit lives on in various forms of humanistic psychology (see also Dilthey, 1976; Harrington, 2000, Rickman, 1988). (p. 78)

From an applied point of view, we are concerned with a question such as this; what does the subject of psychological inquiry and analysis look like through Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness?

We can assert that Dilthey's psychological subject cannot be primarily approached from a perspective that locates its focus for investigation outside of her or his experience. Dilthey's psychology necessitates that the subject's experience is fundamental to his or her consciousness, and thus the investigative practice. Additionally, we can assert that Dilthey's subject cannot be approached from an investigative framework that interprets distinct aspects of the subject's

psyche as causally precedent to the whole, individual subject. Such an orientation would violate the basic principle of the unity of consciousness.

Seen through Dilthey's conceptualization of mental life, the psychological subject would have to be investigated as psychologically integrated, rather than a posterior sum of mental or physiological parts. Dilthey's subject would constitute the center of analysis and psychological investigation, as opposed to preformed ideational templates about, and imposed upon her or him.

Gordon Allport

As a presidential address to a meeting of the American Psychological Association at Berkeley, California on September 7, 1939, Gordon W. Allport (1897-1967) presented a paper entitled *The Psychologist's Frame of Reference* (1939/1940). The paper was intended as a summative interpretation of trends in, and the overall utilization of analytic categories in the academic psychology of his day. Allport (1940) describes this meeting:

Thirty colleagues rated fifty journals according to their significance for, and devotion to, the advancement of psychology as a science. The fourteen journals at the top of the list were chosen for analysis. For every tenth year, beginning 1888 and ending 1938, the entire periodical literature of these fourteen journals was read and analyzed.

(p. 49)

In his paper, Allport notes the general decline in research concerned with faculties, the mind-body problem, the unconscious, and mental processes of various kinds. "Nowadays, we care less than formerly what the *nature* of "intelligence," "learning," "attention," or "drive" may be, but at the same time we care more about avoiding the hypostatization of mental processes" (Allport, 1940, pp. 51-52). We will note that Allport is concerned with psychology's move away from understanding the nature of the analytic categories it works with.

Additionally, Allport made note of the general decline of research that focused on language in studying aspects of higher mental processes. This implies an investigative shift away from the analysis of verbal expression, implicating the expression of experiences of various kinds. Allport also notes that “there is a growing disregard for studies of single cases. It also looks as if modern psychology were becoming appreciably unhistorical” (Allport, 1940, pg. 59). Allport generally considered the above trends in psychology to be negative developments. Given what we now know concerning Dilthey’s scientific-philosophical disposition, it is clear that the latter’s ideas have some resonance with Allport’s critical stances.

Importantly, as a critical aspect of his paper, Allport makes note of the turn away from experience in the process of the psychological analysis of the subject. “Fierce and portentous is the modern attack upon immediate experience” (Allport, 1937, p. 60). And couching the critique in methodological terms, Allport (1940) notes that:

So far as *method* is concerned, we are told that, because the subject is able to make his discriminations only after the alleged experience has departed, any inference of a subjectively unified experience on his part is both anachronistic and unnecessary. If the subject protests that it is evident to him that he had a rich and vivid experience that was not fully represented in his overt discriminations, he is firmly assured that what is vividly self-evident to him is no longer of interest to the scientific psychologist. It has been decided, to quote Boring, that “in any useful meaning of the term existence,” “private experience does not exist”. (pp. 60-61)

Allport’s accent on, and opposition to, mainstream psychology’s tendency away from subjective experience as an investigative category has obvious resonance with Dilthey’s ideas. As we have seen, experience is an essential component in the latter’s psychology.

In order to address the problem of the psychological subject's experience in the investigative dynamic, Allport suggests that understanding provides the foundation for the solution to this. The subject's psychological context must first be understood by the investigator, because, as Allport (1940) argues:

Unless we can first comprehend our subject's value-context, we are unable to know the significance of his behavior as he performs it, for the simple reason that the behavior we perceive is instantly ordered to *our* own presuppositions without any regard to what *his* presuppositions may be. (p. 65)

Allport places importance on understanding the subject from her perspective, in order that her psychological context be grasped on its own experiential terms. This is because "when we make rational reconstructions of our findings (constructs), we do so from the point of view of our presuppositions and communicate them to other scientists sharing these same presuppositions" (Allport, 1937, p. 66). Allport's emphasis on understanding demonstrates conceptual resonance with Dilthey's descriptive and analytic psychology. Also, it serves to further support the importance of experience in approaching the subject of psychological inquiry, as is endorsed by Dilthey.

In discussing the problem of how to address disciplinary presuppositions within psychology as an academic and professional institution, Allport (1940) argued that "unless we have a diversity of presuppositions and interests in our science, we shall lose all those forms of experience that are automatically excluded when but one set of presuppositions is followed" (p. 67). Allport argues that disciplinary diversity is necessary within the institution of mainstream psychology, to support the possibility of more closely approximating subjective experience in investigative practices. Allport's concern for understanding the subjective experience of the

subject clearly demonstrates the relevance of core concepts in Dilthey's work for mainstream psychology.

Allport devotes an entire chapter of his book *Personality: A Psychological Interpretation* (1937) to the question of unity within the individual personality, entitled "The Unity of Personality" (Allport, 1937, p. 343). Here we find the convergence of a central theme in Dilthey's psychology and Allport's concerns. However, Allport does not concede the straightforward, axiomatic unity of personality that are suggested in the writings on consciousness by Dilthey. As Allport (1937) explains:

The only approach that may safely be excluded is the rhapsodic. Here we find theories that do little more than assert personality to be an "Indivisible Whole," "a total integrated pattern of behavior," an *Unteilbarkeit*, an *in sich geschlossene Ganzheit*.

(p. 343)

Allport (1937) views personality as a complex, multi-faceted integration, the comprehension of which requires "an understanding of the *articulate weaving* of motifs, movements, bridge-passages, modulations, contrasts, and codas" (p. 343). In relative contrast to Dilthey's assertions concerning the unity of consciousness, Allport (1937) contends that "Unity, at best, is a matter of degree" (p. 344). Although this distinction does exist between Dilthey and Allport, the continued relevance of the question of unity in consciousness, and by hypothetical extension, personality remains evident for contemporary psychology.

Clinical Applications

Clinical psychology and psychoanalytic theory and practice contain certain core principles which bear resonance with aspects of Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness.

Psychoanalysis

Orthodox psychoanalytic theory has its origins in the work of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), and dates approximately to the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century.

““Psychoanalysis” began around 1890 as an offshoot of psychiatry” (Munroe, 1955, p. v). The extensive and complex body of work that Freud and other psychoanalytic theorists have produced contain concepts which are of relevance for Dilthey’s ideas.

Since its inception in the early part of the twentieth century, psychoanalytic theory and practice have undergone significant change and intra-disciplinary divergence:

Psychoanalysis speaks in many voices. It has spawned a myriad of cultural and clinical theories as well as therapies—some of them more or less classical, others hewing closely to the thought of one or another of Freud’s disciples, and yet others resulting from amalgams of concepts and post-modern discourses.

(Marcus, Rosenberg, 1998, p. 12)

Figures of particular importance to the history of psychoanalysis, but not exhausting this, are Alfred Adler (1870-1937), Carl G. Jung (1875-1961), Karen Horney (1885-1952), Melanie Klein (1882-1960), Donald W. Winnicott (1896-1971), Ronald Fairbairn (1889-1964), Heinz Kohut (1913-1981), and Jacques Lacan (1901-1981). These figures produced some of the most influential and definitive work in the field of psychoanalysis over the course of the twentieth century. A theoretically satisfactory account of each of their contributions to the field moves well beyond our current interests. As such, we will attempt to isolate what is central to psychoanalytic theory insofar as this is relevant to our study.

It is safe to assert that all psychoanalytic systems contain experience as a central component of their respective sub-discipline. Orthodox psychoanalysis was founded partly on the idea that early childhood experiences played a determining role in the psychological development of the

subject. For Freud specifically, the child was seen as situated in a psychologically developmental context triangulated by her mother and father, and anchored in her biology, with attendant instincts. Freud theorized that innate sexual and aggressive impulses were active within the developing child, and specific psychological dynamics were formed in the peculiar interaction of the child with her parents. Freud (1924) theorizes that:

The little girl likes to regard herself as what her father loves above all else; but the time comes when she has to endure a harsh punishment from him and she is cast out of her fool's paradise. The boy regards his mother as his own property; but he finds one day that she has transferred her love and solicitude to a new arrival. Reflection must deepen our sense of the importance of those influences... Although the majority of human beings go through the Oedipus complex as an individual experience, it is nevertheless a phenomenon which is determined and laid down by heredity and which is bound to pass away according to program when the next pre-ordained phase of development sets in. (as cited in Gay, 1989, pp. 661-662)

Freud theorized that the dynamics of and between desire, affection, rejection and aggression between female or male parent, and female or male child, resulted in particular psychological dispositions and varying degrees of adult mental health. All psychoanalytic theory involves some variation on the theme of early childhood experience as an influential factor in the psychological development of the subject.

The interpretation and analysis of a subject's experience is the primary role of any psychoanalyst. Although differing psychoanalytic schools vary in the interpretation of the significance of particular experiences as opposed to others, subjective experience and its impact on the developing person is the general orientation of these. Supporting this idea, Freud

(1911/1915), comments on psychotherapeutic method, accentuating the importance of the subjective state of the client, the unfettered expression of this, and the role of the therapist:

It consists simply in not directing one's notice to anything in particular and in maintaining the same 'evenly-suspended attention' (as I have called it) in the face of all that one hears... It will be seen that the rule of giving equal notice to everything is the necessary counterpart to the demand made on the patient that he should communicate everything that occurs to him without criticism or selection... The rule for the doctor may be expressed: 'He should withhold all conscious influences from his capacity to attend, and give himself over completely to his "unconscious memory".' Or, to put it purely in terms of technique: 'He should simply listen, and not bother about whether he is keeping anything in mind.' (as cited in Gay, 1989, p. 357)

Freud had suggested a psychotherapeutic environment that was able to draw as much of the subject's thoughts about her experiences into expression as possible. The therapist's role in this dynamic was to be openly perceptive to all aspects of the subject's expressions.

Experience, self-reflection, and interpretation are central aspects of psychoanalytic theory and practice. Experience, as we have seen, is an essential component of Dilthey's conceptualization of mental life. Reflexive awareness represents a critical moment in the emergence of self-consciousness for Dilthey, and this is of particular relevance for psychoanalytic theory and practice.

The practice of various kinds of interpretation in psychoanalytic systems bear strong resonance with Dilthey's hermeneutics. This is perhaps best exemplified in the theory of hermeneutic psychoanalysis. In discussing the work of Louis Sass (1949-), Edith Kurzweil (1925-2016) comments that:

Louis Sass... brilliantly explains the ins and outs of the conceptions and the history of hermeneutics, which began with Aristotle. Their more recent antecedents, primarily, are based, among others, on Dilthey's distinctions between *erklären* and *verstehen*, and on Heidegger's and Gadamer's phenomenology of lived experiences... Sass implies, however indirectly, that all psychoanalysts' practices incorporate some sort of hermeneutic stance. (Kurzweil, 1998, as cited in Marcus, Rosenberg, 1998, p. 32)

A fundamental focus on experience, self-reflection, and interpretation is common to both Dilthey's theory and psychoanalysis broadly.

Person-Centered Therapy

The course of the twentieth century saw the development and augmentation of many sub-disciplines within mainstream psychology. *Person-centered therapy*, sometimes referred to as *client-centered therapy*, is a development within clinical psychology that can be roughly dated to the middle of the twentieth century. As Purton (2004) tells us:

In his book *Counselling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice*, published in 1942, Carl Rogers presents what he sees as a new method of therapy... It was in his next book (co-authored with John Wallen) *Counselling with Returned Servicemen* (1946) that Rogers first used the term 'client-centered', along with 'non-directive', as characterizing his approach. (p. 11)

As implied by its title, person-centered therapy seeks to locate the center of the clinical dynamic with the subject or client. This encourages an atmosphere where her subjective experiences and unique organization will not be confronted and presupposed by anterior conceptual and analytic constructs.

Rogers hypothesized that, in the process of early development, “a ‘self-structure’ or ‘self-concept’ forms in which what is valued arises partly from immediate experiencing and partly from values introjected from others, which are experienced *as if* they were the child’s own experiences” (Purton, 2004, p. 12). Rogers believed that psychological disturbance resulted when experiences arose which were incongruent with the self-concept, leading to a distortion of it. Person-centered therapy provided an empathetic and discursively open atmosphere. This was in order that experiences which the client had felt as threatening, and as incongruent with the self-concept, could be examined and properly reintegrated with her unique psychological constitution.

An important aspect of Rogers’ body of work is his formulation of the *actualizing tendency*. “He held that the primary motivation of all human behavior is the actualization of the person’s potentialities” (Purton, 2004, p. 14). This is significant for person-centered therapy because Rogers had theorized that *conditions of worth*, or ideals imposed or introjected by others, for and about the subject’s life, created conflicting actualization drives. “The person is torn between actualizing that ‘self’ (self-concept) which is constituted by the conditions of worth (that is, becoming what one ‘should be’ in the eyes of others) and actualizing their organismic potential” (Purton, 2004, p. 14). The conditions of worth theory maintains that psychological disturbance is the result of this conflict.

Through empathy, and the establishment of a non-judgmental discursive environment, the therapist aims at “encouraging the client to internalize their locus of evaluation” (Purton, 2004, p. 18) The client is led to examine her experiences with other people, and the way she experiences the various influences these others have had on her. With person-centered therapy,

Rogers had developed the foundations for a perspective within clinical psychology that centered around the examination and re-conceptualization of subjective experiences, and the self-concept.

This brief overview of Rogerian person-centered therapy demonstrates the relevance of Dilthey's ideas for clinical psychology in two essential ways. Firstly, experience is central in the theory of both systems. Also, the implications of meaningfulness in Rogers system resonate with Dilthey's analytic and descriptive psychology.

A more contemporary variation of person-centered therapy can be seen in the clinical theory of David Rennie (1940-2013), that "fits between the person-centered and experiential genres" (Rennie, 1998, p. vi). Rennie's (1998) system puts special emphasis on reflexivity as an essential component of the therapeutic process:

The most significant quality of 'human beingness' is our ability to think about ourselves, to think about our thinking, to feel about our feeling, to treat ourselves as objects of our attention and to use what we find there as a point of departure in deciding what to do next. This is reflexivity as I understand it... reflexivity is a major feature of consciousness and is integral to action. (pp. 2-3)

Importantly, Rennie (1998) views human agency and reflexivity as interchangeable concepts, for "They are part of each other in that agency is purposive activity emanating from reflexive activity and returning to it (Rennie, 1997)" (p. 3). Rennie's system incorporates reflexivity as a central aspect of human consciousness, and the phenomenal correlate of agency or action.

Rennie's system also involves a treatment of *holism*, or the question of an 'I' and me in clinical psychology. As he rightly asserts, "The concepts of the 'I' and 'me' have come under attack by behaviorists, language philosophers, connectionists and post-modernists alike" (Rennie, 1998, p. 10). Rennie wants to support the integrity of the psychological self, at least in

part because reflexivity requires this integrated self on which to reflect and assess itself.

Although various systems from contemporary psychology and philosophy have sought to eliminate the integrated self from psychological discourse in various ways, “Something is lost... when this way of looking at experience eclipses reflexivity” (Rennie, 1998, p. 11).

Rennie’s treatment of this question echo’s the modernist picture of the self as an integrated, subjective, and connected self. It also presupposes the role that social construction plays in the development of selfhood and theoretical categories about the self. As Rennie (1998) explains:

The result is an approach that expresses the humanism of Rogers and the literalists but in terms of an ontology that, I believe, more coherently connects the individual with the world (including social relations); it thus presupposes social constructionism to a greater extent (but not exclusively by any means) than is true of Rogerian humanism.
(p. 11)

Additionally, and with a phenomenological tone, in referring to immediate experience and the question of the self, Rennie (1998) comments that “It is also very much in keeping with Gendlin’s view that the felt-sense is holistic and that human-beingness is far more complex than is grasped by all the theories combined” (p. 11). Rennie’s person-centered therapeutic theory employs a version of holism regarding the psychological self that recognizes cultural contingency, the sheer complexity of the self, and degrees of unity within it nonetheless.

Our short review of some basic features of Rennie’s person-centered therapeutic theory demonstrates significant resonance with aspects of Dilthey’s psychology. Both Rennie’s and Dilthey’s systems rely heavily on the notion of experience as an operational concept. Rennie establishes reflexivity as a central component of his theoretical system. As we observed in chapter 3 of our study regarding Dilthey’s treatment of self-consciousness, reflexive awareness

constitutes an essential moment in the emergence of self-consciousness. The question of holism regarding the psychological self is addressed in Rennie's writings, and seeks to maintain certain aspects of the unified but dynamic modernist self. Central to Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness is the principle of the unity of consciousness. Finally, Rennie's recognition and use of the concept felt-sense, in descriptive reference to immediate experience, has phenomenological undertones, and resembles Dilthey's notion of self-feeling.

Conclusion

Dilthey's Theoretical Orientation and Conceptualization of Consciousness

Our discussion began with an explication of Dilthey's intellectual background, including a section on his views on natural science and the human sciences. There, we also reviewed phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions in western thought, and discussed Dilthey's own interpretation and theoretical employment of ideas originating in those schools.

In addition to this, we presented a literature review of scholarship that discussed, analyzed, and contextualized Dilthey and his work. The following conclusion will connect ideas we have discussed in this study to the theoretical precedents discussed in the introduction.

Phenomenology and Dilthey's Conceptualization of Consciousness

Dilthey's employment of the theoretical construct phenomenality is the most pronounced example of his phenomenological orientation. Phenomenality refers to the temporal continuity at the essence of consciousness, that allows for the explanatory possibility of sequence in it. It was shown as a concept that traverses the empirical appearance of psychological contents to describe the more essential phenomenal (temporal) reality involved in conscious activity.

An examination of Dilthey's psychological epistemology highlighted his phenomenological - theoretical orientation. In discussing the treatment of theories of the unconscious, we accentuated the idea that the various contents of consciousness exist along a conscious continuum, from the least articulated of these at the boundaries of consciousness, to those foremost in apperception. The fluid continuity underlying all contents of consciousness implicates the phenomenal seamlessness within consciousness.

Similarly, Dilthey's treatment of the question of self-consciousness, employed the will, self-feeling, and being-for-oneself as integrated phenomenal moments in the emergence of the

psychological self. These aspects of Dilthey's formulation are phenomenological in that they ontologically predicate the emergent properties of mind.

Dilthey's conceptualization of the psychic act and psychic contents are grounded in the properties of temporality and contiguity, which make their analysis implicitly phenomenological. These theoretical formulations were shown to describe the pre-empirical interaction of psychic processes as procedurally fluid and non-discreet.

Phenomenology involves scientific focus on the pre-empirical essence of the object of inquiry. The principle of phenomenality, Dilthey's critique of theories of the unconscious, his theory of self-consciousness, and psychic acts and contents, all concentrate on the sub-empirical essence of psychic phenomena. Dilthey has shown that the nature of consciousness cannot be characterized on the basis of the appearance of emergent psychological properties.

Hermeneutics and Dilthey's Conceptualization of Consciousness

Hermeneutic theory and method play a significant role in Dilthey's work as we have described it. The emphasis that Dilthey places on experience, which is evident throughout his writing on consciousness, is an important indication of his hermeneutic orientation.

Because Dilthey asserts the primacy of experience to the dynamic contents and processes of consciousness, the totality of consciousness can be interpreted on its own terms. In a theoretically important sense, the phenomenal primacy of experience in defining consciousness is needed for interpretive practices in examining subject matter in psychology. Dilthey's pervasive focus on experience throughout his theory is an important aspect of his hermeneutic-methodological orientation.

Viewed as a whole, Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness composes a hermeneutic circle. This we can refer to as a part to whole interpretive dynamic.

The dynamics of consciousness are analyzed and described through the interpretive lens of the essential, phenomenal unity of consciousness. Dilthey's conceptualization of mental life represents a rigorous analysis of the procedural and structural nature of consciousness. These parts are interpreted through the phenomenal properties underlying them, representing a totality.

The employment of a hermeneutic circle as a heuristic tool also serves to better understand Dilthey's view of psychology as a (potential) foundational science for the human sciences. The part (psychology), would ostensibly provide a working epistemological framework through which the whole (the human sciences) could be grounded. This would allow for the production and expression of idiographic knowledge, in respective disciplinary bodies.

Dilthey's pervasive accent on experience in his conceptualization of consciousness provides the theoretical foundations for interpretive practices in his psychology. The epistemology of consciousness he provides theoretically permits for a description of its dynamics, without violating the integrity of its unity. This interpretive dynamic can be applied to the potential positing of psychology at the foundation of the human sciences.

Dilthey's Conceptualization of Consciousness and Explanatory Science

Dilthey's phenomenological and hermeneutic orientation serve to contextualize his psychology in a framework different from that found in explanatory science. Early in this study, we explicated Dilthey's critique of natural scientific method in psychology. This involved a criticism of the drawing of parallels between psychological and physical phenomena. It is now clear that Dilthey's psychology is theoretically congruent with this criticism.

To the extent to which Dilthey variously argues for the unity of consciousness seen in each section of the preceding work, he is implicitly refuting the conceptualization of the psyche on the basis of physiological reductions or intra-psychic distinctions. This implication of Dilthey's

conceptualization distinguishes his ideas on consciousness from specific schools in psychology which he would recognize as explanatory in nature.⁴ Dilthey's theory on mental life is substantially distinct from systems which presuppose the identity of the psychological and physiological, or would otherwise view consciousness as fragmentary.

Findings

The foregoing study is an explication of Wilhelm Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness. The study demonstrated that Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness involves the description and analysis of various procedural and substantive aspects of consciousness. This was shown while maintaining the theoretical integrity of the principle of the unity of consciousness.

In this study, we learned that Dilthey was influenced by schools of thought collectively referred to as phenomenological and hermeneutic, and by extension that method from these schools were important aspects of his work. We also found that Dilthey was generally opposed to the idea that psychology should (primarily) be undertaken as a natural or explanatory science. Given what we have discovered concerning Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness, it is clear that the rationale involved in this criticism is pervasive in his work.

We discovered that the description and analysis of individual experience was Dilthey's proposed alternative to an explanatory psychology. The repeated emphasis on experience, which we saw throughout the preceding study, gives theoretical substance to his proposal for such a psychology.

It was found that Dilthey conceptualized the human sciences as an aggregate of otherwise disparate sub-disciplines, which focus on diverse domains of individual and social reality. We

⁴ For examples of systems in contemporary psychology which differ significantly from Dilthey's general conceptualization of consciousness, see, Haugeland., ed., 1997, Changeux, Ricoeur, 2000, Franklin, 1995.

found that these sub-disciplines could be as apparently distant as the study of poetry to that of economics.

In our discussion concerning Dilthey's conceptualization of mental life specifically, we found Dilthey's use of the general category experience to be an essential aspect of the phenomenal foundations of consciousness. There we discovered that Dilthey's employment of experience served to demonstrate the incongruity between his system, and the methods and epistemology employed by explanatory sciences.

The way in which the concept experience relates to psychic contents was demonstrated. Representing an irreducible totality, the ultimate fundamental datum and facts of consciousness were shown to be central descriptive concepts in Dilthey's broader formulation.

We found that Dilthey developed the concept phenomenality to refer to the temporal essence of consciousness. Everything that happens in consciousness, happens in time, and is premised on it. We also found that phenomenality served as a theoretical bridge between abstract conscious datum and sequence in mental life.

Regarding the concepts internal and external, we discovered that Dilthey theorized perception and self-consciousness as an essential theoretical formulation for the recognition of the external world. It was shown that perception alone cannot account for the recognition of externality. We learned that self-consciousness, which emerges in experience, provides perception with a complete picture of the external.

Internality was shown as the conscious totality that stands in contrast to the recognition of the external. It was also discovered that internality was defined against basic cognitive processes, which Dilthey also characterized as external.

We then found that Dilthey was critical of predominating theories of self-consciousness current to him. This was seen in Dilthey's criticism of Kant's conceptualization of self-consciousness. This involved the positing of an analytic self or 'I', which observes the spontaneous activity of sense making through awareness of the world. Dilthey suggested that this implied an infinite regress. We observed that Dilthey criticized Fichte's proposed solution to this on the grounds that it sought to identify subject and object in self-consciousness. We also observed his criticism that Herbart was left with the problem of a representing self-consciousness and representation itself, which was essentially the Kantian dilemma. Herbart's position was also shown to imply an infinite regress.

We learned that Dilthey's proposed solution to the theoretical problem of self-consciousness rested in the concepts self-feeling, reflexive awareness, and being-for-oneself. Self-feeling was seen to be the self-evident feeling of one's self-consciousness. Reflexive awareness was defined as the conscious activity involved in self-feeling. Reflexive awareness and self-feeling were shown to be complimentary theoretical constructs. We learned that being-for-oneself represented an instance of existential awareness in which self-consciousness was situated.

We learned that a subject - object distinction within self-consciousness was seen by Dilthey as a reflexive phenomenon, and therefore not essential to it regarding the question of its true nature.

It was shown that the concept the given represented the subject's self-evident, total psychological contents in experience, and marked a point of departure for the study of psychology as a discipline.

Our study revealed that the psychic nexus was a theoretical representation of the pre-reflexive interconnection between the contents of consciousness. This theoretical construct was also shown to demonstrate the psychological interconnectedness of the human sciences.

Our study explained Dilthey's theory of sensation, perception and representation. Kant's ideas regarding faculties of the mind, namely, cognition, feeling, and, desire, as distinguishable in representations, or object consciousness were examined. Also, we examined Dilthey's interpretation of Brentano's conceptualization of faculties. There, we found that Brentano theorized the immanent objects of consciousness as the foundation of psychological faculties.

We learned that Dilthey is opposed to the principle of a faculty psychology. In the place of faculties of mind Dilthey posited aspects; these were, thought, willing, and feeling.

It was found that, to account for the problem of representation, Dilthey made an epistemic distinction between sensation and perception on the one hand, and representation and thought on the other. Sensation and perception were shown as originating in the external world. Conversely, thought and representation were conceptualized as internal. These could not be categorically differentiated on the basis of objects in consciousness, or from sensation and perception.

Dilthey's critique and treatment of the question of an unconscious mental domain was explained. Dilthey was shown as opposed to the idea that psychic processes and contents could exist outside of conscious awareness, which is what he argued each theory of an unconscious domain of the mind entailed. Dilthey asserted that an unconscious domain of the mind could not be assumed on the basis of its apparent effects in expressed consciousness. We learned that Dilthey interpreted ostensible unconscious psychological contents, as contained by a single consciousness, which are within it, but not fully attended to by it. Dilthey theorized the various contents of consciousness as existing along a conscious continuum, from those least articulated

in perception, to those foremost in apperceptive articulation. This assertion demonstrated that Dilthey doesn't view perception and apperception as phenomenally separate aspects of consciousness. Critically, we found that Dilthey denied the possibility of proving the existence of an unconscious mental domain, because the contents of these would not be available to recollection, and therefore cannot be empirically examined.

In examining Dilthey's conceptualization of logic, we found that he theorized thought, and the logic of thought, as corresponding with reality. This allowed that reality and nature are intelligible through logic. We also found that Dilthey saw the datum of thought as phenomenally irreducible on all levels of psychic processes. That logic is conceptualized as a purposive system of thought, because it represents the reality to which it corresponds, was also discovered.

The significance of the process of abstraction from particulars to universals in the development of thought using logic was shown. There, we saw that the elementary operation of thought inheres extrapolation. This process was found to be at the basis of the complexity and organization of thought more generally.

It was shown that representations in thought which correspond with a logical structure are the result of underlying psychological processes, but must be distinguished from these. This was because cognitive processes are seen as content neutral by Dilthey. Thought expresses the logical relation between propositions, the structure of which it makes sense.

We learned that Dilthey conceptualizes inference as the self-evident foundation of logic. Also, it was found that experience is a necessary precondition for the existence of inferences, as it is the epistemic basis of these. Experience was also found to be requisite for the assessment of inferences.

Concerning the psychic act and the unity of consciousness, it was shown that Dilthey distinguishes between two broad dimensions of consciousness, but from a descriptive point of view, not ontologically.

We explained Dilthey's conceptualization of the objective nexus, and the distinction of this from the secondary nexus. The first of these was shown to encompass all of psychic life or consciousness. The second roughly corresponded to apperception, or those contents of consciousness which are most obviously present to it. The seamless continuity of consciousness between these nexus' was found to be an essential phenomenal property in that dynamic.

The difference between psychic acts and psychic contents was demonstrated. The former were described as psychic processes, and the latter as simple representations, which could be relatively isolated in consciousness through attention. Also, psychic acts, or psychic processes, were found to be phenomenally distinct from that which they contain or express; psychic contents or simple representations. The distinction between these categories was found to be elemental in the differentiation of subject and object in consciousness. Psychic acts and psychic contents were also shown to be the basis for the differentiation between the continuous and the discrete in the psyche. The former were shown as primordially perceived as continuous, and the latter discrete.

A unit of the psychic act was found to be delimited by expressions, and the initiation of movement, or an act of the will. It was shown that a unit of the psychic act could be relatively isolated in the overall continuum of consciousness, in the context of expressions, or an act of the will. The psychic act was also found to have interest as its essential phenomenal ground.

The psychological content of freedom and necessity were shown as having the psychic act at their foundations. Psychic acts were also shown as embodying willing, feeling, and knowing.

The will was seen as central to these, as it represents change in psychic life. We also learned that the will, present to awareness as volition, represented the basis for the organization of thought in consciousness as a psychic act.

The central thesis underlying this study was then addressed in the context of a detailed examination of the psychic act. It was found that Dilthey conceptualized the phenomenality of consciousness to be its activity. Dilthey's treatment of the psychic act was shown to imply that the being of consciousness is its temporal activity. The appearance of difference and distinction within this activity was described as an exercise of abstraction. This established a theoretical proof that Dilthey utilizes in demonstrating the necessity of the unity of consciousness. This was explained throughout the study, while describing and conceptually integrating an analysis of its various dynamics and aspects.

Dilthey's formulation on the analytic and genetic aspects of psychic contents was explained, in conjunction with the phenomenological analysis of sensation and perception. Central to our findings there, was the stipulation that Dilthey opposed the reduction of representational content to physiological operations.

Analytic psychic contents were revealed as the aggregate of simple representations present to apperception in its volitional activity. In contrast, genetic psychic contents were defined as simple representations added to awareness through attention.

We found that Dilthey refutes the idea that physiological explanations of sensation and perception could provide an exhaustive account of the causal and procedural dynamics leading to representation. Dilthey does not discount the relationship between physiological stimuli and the eventual emergence of their products in consciousness as representations. We learned that these latter are there for attention and thought primarily.

Sensations were found to be the point of demarcation between the self and the external world. Self-consciousness was shown to distinguish itself from the contents of sensations. We demonstrated that Dilthey conceptualizes sensations as non-discreet, or providing consciousness with a single, unified representation of the external world. Sensations were found to orient the subject in the world.

It was demonstrated that Dilthey conceptualizes consciousness as an expanding mode of articulation. The incorporation of the contents of consciousness in a structured fashion was viewed as evidence of the unity of consciousness. Continuity was seen as underlying the transition and adjustment of contents in relation to one another.

The idea that Dilthey rejected the theoretical foundations of a meaningful relationship between a psychological minimum in sensation and perception, and conscious awareness was explained. There, we learned that Dilthey views the idea of a perceptual minimum as inconsistent with perception, because the qualities inherent in it cannot be properly isolated as minimum properties. Contiguity in consciousness was also explained as a reason as to why discreet minimums of sensation and perception are incongruent with the nature of consciousness. Additionally, it was demonstrated that Dilthey proscribed criteria for the establishing of minimums in sensation and perception, which showed their potential representation to be highly complex if problematic.

We learned that Dilthey refutes the idea that perception could be reduced to its physiological correlates. Projects which aimed at this conclusion relied on abstractions in their hypotheses, rather than observable phenomena, and were shown as untenable for Dilthey.

Dilthey asserted that all sensations and perceptions eventuate in consciousness, even if they had not been originally detected by awareness. We found that it was partly for this reason that

physiological units were theorized as the boundary of the possibility for a minimum in sensation and perception. Further, as Dilthey was shown to conceptualize sensations as abstractions, when these were sought out in quantified analysis, other sensations were necessarily ignored. This reinforces the postulation that sensations express themselves as unified in consciousness. Also, we learned that Dilthey was critical of the focus on quantity in measuring sensation and perception, while ignoring the qualities particular to these.

It was demonstrated that sensation and perception were not extensively infinite, but that the system of qualities was intensively infinite. There, we found that the subject's sensory system is finite, but the dynamics and contours possible for the material of sensations and perceptions in consciousness is not.

Our study found that sensory - perceptual contents are only distinct from conscious awareness in an epistemologically relative fashion. It was demonstrated that reflexive awareness considers sensory - perceptual contents in the organizing activity of consciousness. This point accentuated the psychic activity of a reflexive self-consciousness as a unified entity.

Further, we learned that Dilthey's core conceptual developments regarding consciousness bear resonance with specific psychological systems. There, we saw that Gordon Allport's work had important commonalities with Dilthey's ideas. This was seen most notably in Allport's criticism that much of his contemporary psychology had largely eschewed the history of psychology from its systems. Additionally, Allport believed that subjective experience had been systematically and unnecessarily minimized in the practice of academic psychology, and should be reintroduced as an essential component of investigative practices. We found that Allport also placed emphasis on understanding and the unity of the psyche, bearing self-evident resonance with Dilthey's formulations.

It was shown that psychoanalysis, a theoretically broad and multi-faceted school of thought, employs certain core principles which resonate closely with Dilthey's psychology. Primary among these is the requirement that a subject's experience be central to the psychoanalytic-therapeutic dynamic. We also learned that self-reflection and interpretation within the therapeutic context is central to psychoanalysis, and is resonant in Dilthey's employment of reflexive awareness as a conceptual tool, and hermeneutic orientation respectfully.

We learned that person centered therapy, a clinical theory and practice, contains principles which bear robust commonalities with Dilthey's thinking. There, we examined the core concepts of subjective experience, as implied by the phrase person-centered, and meaningfulness exemplified in the work of Carl Rogers, one of the field's most significant contributors. The former concept is central to Dilthey's thought, and the latter is implicit in his hermeneutic theoretical approach to psychology.

Adding to our discussion on the resonance of Dilthey's thought with person-centered therapy, we examined David Rennie's original contribution to the method. There, we learned that Rennie places special emphasis on reflexivity as a fundamental quality of the psychological condition of the subject, and therapeutic setting. His system also emphasizes the importance of the recognition of the 'I' or self in psychology, a type of holism. We learned that this acknowledges the complex of cultural and historical influences for the subject which, in a specific sense, become integrated with a unified consciousness. We demonstrated that reflexivity and the concept of a unified consciousness as fundamental components of Dilthey's theory, share in a conceptual lineage with Rennie's ideas on person-centered therapy.

We learned that Wilhelm Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness is theoretically multi-faceted and qualitatively dynamic. This was seen to involve the drawing of qualitative

distinctions within consciousness, while describing the relations of these as structurally unified, not discreet.

The theoretical steps in the preceding study have involved a description of specific epistemological and phenomenal aspects of consciousness, each serving to underscore the overarching unity of it. Dilthey's conceptualization of consciousness is a theoretical body of systematically integrated ideas on the foundations and expressed dynamics of mind. This series of intersecting formulations demonstrated the unity of consciousness as a necessary condition of mental life.

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